

L E T T E R S

CONTAINING

A S K E T C H

OF THE

POLITICS OF FRANCE,

From the Thirty-first of May 1793, till the
Twenty-eighth of July 1794.



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POLITICS OF FRANCE,

FROM THE THIRTY-FIRST OF MAY 1793, TILL THE
TWENTY-EIGHTH OF JULY 1794,

AND OF

THE SCENES WHICH HAVE PASSED IN THE
PRISONS OF PARIS.

BY

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LETTER I.

Switzerland, September 1794.

MY DEAR SIR,

AFTER so long a suspension of our correspondence, after a silence like that of death, and a separation which for some time past seemed as final as if we had been divided by the limits of "that country from whose bourn no traveller returns," with what grateful pleasure did I recognize your hand-writing, with what eagerness did I break the seal of your welcome letter, and with what soothing emotions receive the tidings of your welfare, and the assurance of your affection! Your letter was a talisman that served to conjure up a thousand images of sorrows and of joys that are past, and which were obliterated by the turbulent sensations of dismay and horror.

Perhaps it will not be uninteresting to you to receive from me a sketch of the scenes which have passed in Paris since the second of June, an epocha to be for ever deplored by the friends of liberty, which seated a vulgar and sanguinary despot on the ruins of a throne, till the memorable 28th of July 1794, when Liberty, bleeding with a thousand wounds, revived once more. If the picture I send you of those extraordinary events be not well drawn, it is at least marked with the characters of truth, since I have been the witness of the scenes I de-

scribe, and have known personally all the principal actors. Those scenes, connected in my mind with all the detail of domestic sorrow, with the feelings of private sympathy, with the tears of mourning friendship, are impressed upon my memory in characters that are indelible. They rise in sad succession like the shades of Banquo's line, and pass along my shuddering recollection.

After having so long suffered without daring to utter a complaint, it will relieve my oppressed spirits, to give you an account of our late situation; and, in so doing, I shall feel the same sort of melancholy pleasure as the mariner who paints the horrors of the tempest when he has reached the harbour, and sheds a tender tear over his lost companions who have perished in the wreck—Ah! my dear friend, that overwhelming recollection fills my heart with anguish which only they who have suffered can conceive. Those persons in whose society I most delighted, in whose cultivated minds and enlightened conversation I found the sole compensation for what I had lost in leaving my country and my friends—to see them torn from me for ever, to know the precise moment in which they were dragged to execution, to feel—but let me turn a while from images of horror which I have considered but too deeply, and which have cast a sadness over my mind that can never, never be dispelled. Whenever they recur, a funereal veil seems to me to be spread over nature; and neither the consciousness of present, nor the assurance of future safety, neither the charms of society, nor all the graces, nor all the wonders of the scenes I am now contemplating, can dissipate the gloom.

Not long after the reign of Robespierre began, all passports to leave the country were refused, and the arrestation of the English residing in France was

decreed by the national convention; but the very next day the decree was repealed on the representations of some French merchants, who shewed its impolicy. We therefore concluded that we had no such measures to fear in future; and we heard from what we believed to be good authority, that any decree passed with respect to the English, it would be that of their being ordered to leave the republic. The political clouds in the mean time gathered thick round the hemisphere: we heard rumours of severity and terror, which seemed like those hollow noises that roll in the dark gulph of the volcano, and portend its dangerous eruptions: but no one could calculate how far the threatened mischief would extend, and how wide a waste of ruin would desolate the land. Already considerable numbers were imprisoned as suspected—*suspected!* that indefinite word, which was tortured into every meaning of injustice and oppression, and became what the French call the *mot de ralliement*, the initiative term of captivity and death.

One evening when Bernardin St. Pierre, the author of the charming little novel of Paul and Virginia, was drinking tea with me, and while I was listening to a description he gave me of a small house which he had lately built in the centre of a beautiful island of the river that flows by Essonne, which he was employed in decorating, and where he meant to realise some of the lovely scenes which his fine imagination has pictured in the Mauritius, I was suddenly called away from this fairy land by the appearance of a friend, who rushed into the room, and with great agitation told us, that a decree had just passed in the national convention, ordering all the English in France to be put into arrestation in the space of four-and-twenty hours, and their property to be confiscated. We passed

the night without sleep, and the following day in anxiety and perturbation not to be described, expecting every moment the commissaries of the revolutionary committee and their guards, to put in force the mandates of the convention. As the day advanced, our terror increased: in the evening we received information that most of our English acquaintances were conducted to prison. At length night came; and no commissaries appearing, we began to flatter ourselves that, being a family of women, it was intended that we should be spared; for the time was only now arrived when neither sex nor age gave any claim to compassion. Overcome with fatigue and emotion, we went to bed with some faint hopes of exemption from the general calamity of our countrymen. These hopes were however but of short duration. At two in the morning we were awakened by a loud knocking at the gate of the hotel, which we well knew to be the fatal signal of our approaching captivity; and a few minutes after the bell of our apartments was rung with violence. My sister and myself hurried on our clothes and went with trembling steps to the anti-chamber, when we found two commissaries of the revolutionary committee of our section, accompanied by a guard, two of whom were placed at the outer door with their swords drawn, while the rest entered the room. One of these constituted authorities held a paper in his hand, which was a copy of the decree of the convention, and which he offered to read to us; but we declined hearing it, and told him we were ready to obey the law. Seeing us pale and trembling, he and his colleague endeavoured to comfort us; they begged us to compose ourselves; they repeated that our arrestation was only part of a general political measure, and that innocence had nothing to fear.—Alas! innocence was

no longer any plea for safety. They took a procès-verbal of our names, ages, the country where we were born, the length of time we had lived in France; and when this register was finished, we were told that we must prepare to depart. We were each of us allowed to take as much clean linen as we could tie up in a handkerchief, and which was all the property which we could now call our own; the rest, in consequence of the decree, being seized by the nation. Sometimes, under the pressure of a great calamity, the most acute sensations are excited by little circumstances which form a part of the whole, and serve in the retrospect of memory, like certain points in a landscape, to call up the surrounding scenery: such is the feeling with which I recall the moments when, having got out of our apartments, we stood upon the staircase surrounded with guards, while the commissaries placed the seals on our doors. The contrast between the prison where we were going to be led, and that home which was now closed against us, perhaps for years, filled my heart with a pang for which language has no utterance. Some of the guards were disposed to treat us with rudeness; which the commissaries sternly repressed, and ordering them to keep at some distance, made us lean on their arms, for they saw we stood in need of support, in our way to the committee-room. We found this place crowded with commissaries and soldiers, some sleeping, some writing, and others amusing themselves with pleasantries of a revolutionary nature, to which we listened trembling. Every half-hour a guard entered, conducting English prisoners, among whom were no women but ourselves. Here we passed the long night; and at eight in the morning our countrymen were taken to the prison of the Madelonnettes, while we were still detained

at the committee. We discovered afterwards that this was owing to the humanity of the commissaries who arrested us, and who sent to the municipality to know if we might not be taken to the Luxembourg, where we should find good accommodations, while at the Madelonnettes' scarcely a bed could be procured. All that compassion could dictate, all the lenity which it was in the power of these commissaries to display without incurring ten years imprisonment, the penalty annexed to leaving us at liberty, we experienced. Humanity from members of a revolutionary committee! You will perhaps exclaim in the language of the Jews, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" It is certain, however, strange as it may seem, that our two commissaries behaved towards us as if they remembered that we were defenceless women in a land of strangers; that we were accused of no crime except that of being born on the soil of England; and that, if we were punished, we had only deserved it by trusting with too easy a belief in that national faith which was now violated. By the way, when I tell you that we experienced compassion from revolutionary committees, you will not suppose I mean to assert that compassionate men formed the majority of their committees. The greater part of mankind in all ages, even when accustomed to the most elevated rank, have abused power: how then could it be hoped that unlimited power would not be abused, which was confided to men who were for the most part ignorant and unenlightened; men who, till that period, confined to their shops and their manual occupations, were suddenly transported into splendid hotels, with authority to unlock cabinets blazing with jewels, to seize upon heaps of uncounted gold, and with a stroke of their pens to disperse as

many warrants for imprisonment, as caprice, envy, or mistaken zeal might prompt; who were made arbiters of the liberty, property, and even lives of their fellow-citizens: and who were incited, nay even compelled, to acts of violence under the penalty of being branded with the guilt of *moderantism*? When such was the new-established system, when it required the most daring courage to be humane, and when to be cruel was to be safe, can you wonder, that among the revolutionary committees in general there was not "as much pity to be found as would fill the eye of a wren?" After passing the whole day, as we had done the night, in the committee-room, orders arrived from the municipality to send us to the former palace, now the prison of the Luxembourg, where we were attended by two guards within each coach, while two walked on each side. What strange sensations I felt as I passed through the streets of Paris, and ascended the steps of the Luxembourg, a sad spectacle to the crowd! We were conducted to the range of apartments above the former rooms of state, where we were received with the utmost civility by the keeper of the prison, Benoit, a name which many a wretch has blessed, for many a sorrow his compassion and gentleness have softened. His heart was indeed but ill suited to his office; and often he incurred the displeasure of those savages by whom he was employed, and who wished their victims to feel the full extent of their calamity, unmitigated by any detail of kindness, any attention to those little wants which this benevolent person was anxious to remove, or those few comforts which he had the power to bestow. The barbarians thought it not enough to load their victims with iron, unless "it entered into their souls." But Benoit was not to be intimidated into cruelty. Without deviating

from his duty, he pursued his steady course of humanity; and may the grateful benedictions of the unhappy have ascended for him to heaven!

We had a good apartment allotted us, which a few weeks before had been inhabited by Valazé, one of the deputies of the convention, who was now transferred to the prison of the Conciergerie. Our apartment, with several adjoining, had soon after the event of the 31st of May been prepared for the imprisonment of the deputies of the *côté droit*; and for that purpose the windows which commanded a fine view of the Luxembourg-gardens had been blocked up to the upper panes, which were barred with iron. Mattrasses were provided for us in this gloomy chamber, the door of which was locked by one of our jailors; and we had suffered too much fatigue of body, as well as disturbance of mind, not to find a refuge from sorrow in some hours of profound sleep.

LETTER II.

THE next morning the sun arose with unusual brightness; and with the aid of a table on which I mounted, I saw through our grated windows the beautiful gardens of the Luxembourg. Its tall majestic trees had not yet lost their foliage; and though they were fallen, like our fortunes, "into the fear, the yellow leaf," they still presented those rich gradations of colouring which belong to autumn. The sun gilded the gothic spires of the surrounding convents, which lifted up their tall points above the venerable groves; while on the back-ground of the

scenery arose the hills of Meudon. It seemed to me as if the declining season had shed its last interesting graces over the landscape to sooth my afflicted spirit; and such was the effect it produced. It is scarcely possible to contemplate the beauties of nature without that enthusiastic pleasure which swells into devotion; and when such dispositions are excited in the mind, resignation to sufferings, which in the sacred words of scripture "are but for a moment," becomes a less difficult duty.

The Luxembourg had lately been fitted up to receive the crowd of new inhabitants, with which it was going to be peopled, and every apartment obtained a particular appellation, which was inscribed on the outside of the door. We were lodged in the chamber of Cincinnatus: Brutus, I think, was our next-door neighbour; and Socrates had pitched his tent at the distance of a few paces. The chamber of *Indivisibility* was allotted to some persons accused of *federalism*, and *Liberty* was written in broad characters over the door of a prisoner who was *au secret**. With respect to great names, it has been observed in Paris, that almost all the illustrious characters of Greece and Rome have been led to the Guillotine—for instance, Brutus, who often, while we were in prison, came from the municipality with orders from Anaxagoras, was soon after doomed to an equal fate,

"Alike in fortune, as alike in fame!"

together with Anacharsis, Agricola, Aristides, Phocion, Sempronius Gracchus, Epaminondas, Cato the elder and the younger, and many other no less

* In close confinement.

celebrated worthies, who fell in sad succession under the sword of Maximilian †.

Our prison was filled with a multitude of persons of different conditions, characters, opinions and countries, and seemed an epitome of the whole world. The mornings were devoted to business, and passed in little occupations, of which the prisoners sometimes complained, but for which perhaps they had reason to be thankful, since less leisure was left them to brood over their misfortunes. Every one had an appointed task; in each chamber the prisoners, by turns, lighted the fires, swept the rooms, arranged the beds; and those who could not afford to have dinner from a tavern, or, as the rich were yet permitted, from their own houses, prepared themselves their meals. Every chamber formed a society subject to certain regulations: a new president was chosen every day, or every week, who enforced its laws and maintained good order. In some chambers no person was allowed to sing after ten, in others, after eleven at night. This restriction would, perhaps, have been superfluous in England in a similar situation; but it was highly necessary here, since it prevented such of the prisoners as were more light-hearted than the rest from singing all night long, to the annoyance of others of their neighbours who might think the music which resounded through the prison during the day fully sufficient. The system of equality, whatever opposition it met with in the world, was in its full extent practised in the prison. United by the strong tie of common calamity, the prisoners considered themselves as bound to soften the general evil by mutual kind offices; and strangers meeting in such circumstances soon became friends,

* The christian name of Robespierre.

The poor lived not upon the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, but shared the comforts of the repast; and here was found a community of the small stock of goods, which belonged to the whole without the necessity of a requisition. One broom, which was the property of a countess, was used by twenty delicate hands to sweep the respective apartments; and a tea-kettle with which a friend furnished my mother was literally, as Dr. Johnson observed of his own, "never allowed time to cool," but was employed from morning till night in furnishing the English with tea.

In the afternoon, the prisoners met in an anti-chamber, which commanded a view of the gardens. Here they formed themselves into groups: some conversed, others walked up and down the room; others gazed from the windows on the walks below, where, perhaps, they recognised a relation or a friend, who being denied the privilege of visiting the prison, had come to sooth them by a look or tear of sympathy. During the first days of our confinement, the prisoners were permitted to see their friends; and many a striking contrast of gaiety and sorrow did the anti-chamber then exhibit. In one part of the room, lively young people were amusing their visitors by a thousand little pleasantries on their own situation; in another, a husband who was a prisoner was taking leave of his wife who had come to see him, and shedding tears over his child who was clinging to his knees, or had thrown its arms around his neck and refused to be torn from its father. As the number of prisoners increased, which they did so rapidly, that in less than a week they were augmented from an hundred to a thousand, the rules of the prison became more severe, and the administrators of the police gave strict orders, that no person whatever should be

admitted. After this period the wives of some of the prisoners came regularly every day, bringing their children with them to the terrace of the gardens. You often saw the mother weeping, and the children stretching out their little hands and pointing to their fathers, who stood with their eyes fixed upon the objects of their affection: but sometimes a surly sentinel repressed these melancholy effusions of tenderness, by calling to the persons in the walk to keep off, and make no signs to the prisoners.— In the mean time, among the crowd that filled the public room were fine gentlemen and fine ladies, who had held the highest rank at court, some flirting together, others making appointments for card parties or music in their own apartments in the evening, and others relating to us in pathetic language all they had suffered, and all they had lost by the revolution. It was impossible not to sympathize in the distresses of some, or avoid wondering at the folly of others, in whom the strong sense of danger could not overcome the feelings of vanity; and who, although the tremendous decree had just gone forth, making “terror the order of the day,” and knowing that the fatal pre-eminence of rank was the surest passport to the guillotine, could not resist using the proscribed nomenclature of “Madame la duchesse,” “Monsieur le comte,” &c. which seemed to issue from their lips like natural melodies to which the ear has long been accustomed, and which the voice involuntarily repeats. There were, however, among the captive nobility many persons who had too much good sense not to observe a different conduct, who had proved themselves real friends to liberty, had made important sacrifices in its cause, and who had been led to prison by revolutionary committees on pretences the most trivial, and sometimes from mistakes the most ludicrous.

Such was the fate of the former count and countess of ———, who had distinguished themselves from the beginning of the revolution by the ardour of their patriotism and the largeness of their civic donations. They had hitherto lived undisturbed in their splendid hotel, and there they might probably have continued to live a little longer, had not the Countess, in an evil hour, sent down to her chateau a fine marble hearth, which by some accident was broken in the way. The steward sent a letter, in which, among other things, he mentioned that the “foyer * must be repaired at Paris.” This letter was intercepted and read by the revolutionary committee. They swore, they raged at the dark designs of aristocracy. “Here,” said they, “is a daring plot indeed! a *foyer* of counter-revolution, and to be repaired at Paris! We must instantly seize the authors and the accomplices.” In vain the Countess related the story of the hearth, and asserted that no conspiracy lurked beneath the marble: both herself and her husband were conducted to the maison d’arrêt of their section, from which we saw them arrive at the Luxembourg with about sixty other persons at the hour of midnight, after having been led through the streets in procession by the light of an immense number of flambeaux, and guarded by a whole battalion. These prisoners had at least the consolation of finding themselves in the society of many of their friends and acquaintances, for all the polite part of the fauxbourg St. Germain might be said to be assembled at the Luxembourg in mass. Imprisonment here was, however, no longer the exclusive distinction of former nobility, but was extended to great numbers of the

* *Foyer* is the French name for hearth, and also for the central point of a system.

former third estate. We had priests, physicians, merchants, shop-keepers, actors and actresses, French valets and English waiting-women, all assembled together in the public room; but in the private apartments Benoit's benevolent heart taught him the most delicate species of politeness, by placing those persons together who were most likely to find satisfaction in each other's society.

Amidst many an eloquent tale of chateaux levelled with the ground, and palaces where, to borrow an image of desolation from Ossian, "the fox might be seen looking out at the window," we sometimes heard the complaints of simple sorrow unallied to greatness; but, like the notes of the starling, "so true in time to nature were they chanted," that they seized irresistibly on the heart. Of this kind was a scene which passed sometimes between a poor English woman and her dog, which she had brought to keep her company in her captivity. She had been house-keeper in a French family, and, some months before she was imprisoned, had sent her daughter, who was her only child, to her friends in England. The poor woman often exclaimed, while her face was bathed in tears, "Oh, Charlotte, Charlotte, I shall never see you again!" Whenever the dog heard the name of Charlotte, he began to howl in so melancholy a note that it was impossible not to sympathise in his lamentation.

The most frightful circumstance which attended our arrestation were the visits of Henriot, the commandant of the military force of Paris. This wretch had been one of the executioners on the second of September, and was appointed by the commune of Paris on the 31st of May to take the command of the National Guard, to point the cannon against the convention, to violate the representation of the people, and to act the prelude of

that dark drama of which France has been the desolated scene, and Europe the affrighted spectator. Henriot performed his part so much to the satisfaction of his employers, that he was continued in his command; and it was a part of his office to visit the prisons, and take care that they were properly guarded. The first time I saw him was the day after our confinement. He entered on a sudden our apartment, brandishing his sword, and accompanied by twelve of his officers. There was something in his look which did not give you simply the idea of the ferocity which is sometimes to be found among civilized Europeans: his fierceness seemed to be of that kind which belongs to a cannibal of New Zealand; and he looked not merely as if he longed to plunge his sabre in our bosoms, but to drink a libation of our blood. He poured forth a volley of oaths and imprecations, called out to know how many guillotines must be erected for the English, and did not leave our chamber till one person who was present had fainted with terror. In this manner he visited every apartment, spreading consternation and dismay; and these visits were repeated three or four times in a week. Whenever the trampling of his horse's feet was heard in the court-yard, the first prisoner who distinguished the well-known sound gave the alarm, and in one moment the public room was cleared; every person flying with the precipitation of fear to his own apartment. Every noise was instantly hushed; a stillness like that of death pervaded the whole dwelling; and we remained crouching in our cells, like the Greeks in the cave of Polyphemus, till the monster disappeared. The visits of the administrators of police, though not so terrific as those of Henriot, were nothing less than soothing. Brutality, as well as terror, was the order of the day;

and those public functionaries, whose business it was not only to see that the police of the prison was well regulated, but also to hear if the prisoners had any subject of complaint, used to make the enquiry in a tone of such ferocity, that, whatever oppressions might hang on the heart, the lips lost the power of giving them utterance. The visits of the police generally produced some additional rigour to our confinement; and in a short time all access to us whatever was forbidden except by letters, which were sent open, and delivered to us after being examined by the sentinels. There was sometimes room for deep meditation on the strange caprice and vicissitudes of fortune. We found the ex-minister Amelot a prisoner in the Luxembourg; he, who during his administration had distributed lettres de cachet with so much liberality. Tyranny had now changed its instruments, and he was become himself the victim of despotism with new insignia; the *blue ribband* had given place to the *red cap*, and "de par le roi" was transformed into "par mesure de sûreté générale." By his order La Tude, whose history is so well known, had been confined thirty years in the Bastille. He was now enjoying the sweets of liberty; and, before the prison-doors were shut against strangers, came frequently to visit some of his friends in the very room where the minister was imprisoned.

Amelot, in a comfortable apartment and surrounded by society, did not bear his confinement with the same firmness as La Tude had borne the solitude of his dungeon, cheered only by the plaintive sounds of his flute of reeds. He was in a short time bereft of his reason; and, among the wanderings of his imagination, used to address letters to all the kings of Europe and all the emigrant princes, inviting them to sumptuous repasts, to

which he sometimes proposed admitting the national convention, to shew that he was above bearing malice.

Whenever any new prisoners arrived, the rest crowded around them, and hastened to calm their minds by the most soothing expressions of sympathy. Not such were the emotions excited by the appearance of Maillard, who was one of the murderers on the second of September, and who had lately been appointed to a command in the revolutionary army; from which, for some malversations, he was now dismissed, sent to prison, and ordered into close confinement. He had taken a very active part in the late transactions, and had a few days before his own arrest, conducted to prison two fine boys, who were the sons of the ex-minister La Tour du Pin, together with their governor, who was a priest. They were stepping into a carriage, which was to convey them to school, when they were seized upon by Maillard, who taking the youngest, a child of eleven years of age, by the shoulder, said to him in a stern accent, "*Il faut dire la verité, toute la verité, et rien que la verité**." No sooner was Maillard brought into the anti-chamber, while his room was preparing, than the little boy recognized his acquaintance, and running up to him cried, "*Bon jour, citoyen Maillard—il faut dire la verité, toute la verité, et rien que la verité.*"

Nothing could be more painful than the sensations excited by reading the evening papers, which the prisoners were at this time permitted to receive, and which were expected with that trembling anxiety with which, under present evils, we long to

* You must speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

look into the promises of futurity. The evening paper seemed to us the book of our destiny; but there we could trace no soothing characters of hope, or mercy. Every line was stamped with conspiracy, vengeance, desolation, and death; and the reading the events of the day left impressions on our minds which often deprived us of sleep. We sometimes quitted the crowd in the public room, and, shutting ourselves up in our own apartment, endeavoured, amidst the evils of this world, like Sterne's monk, to look beyond it. If such meditation was calculated to wipe away our tears, it sometimes made them flow—"Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee: according to the greatness of Thy power, preserve Thou those that are appointed to die."

LETTER III.

THE days of my captivity are often brought back to my remembrance, by circumstances which seem sufficiently remote from sorrows; by that connexion of the past with the present, which Aken-side describes so beautifully*: and you will perhaps think that my imagination is somewhat disordered, when I tell you that the lake, from the luxuriant banks of which I send you this letter, recalls to my mind our apartment in the prison. The walls of that apartment were hung with tapestry which described a landscape of romantic beauty. On that

* Pleasures of Imagination, book iii.

landscape I often gazed till I almost persuaded myself that the scenery was alive around me, so much did I delight in the pleasing illusion. How often, while my eyes were fixed on that canvass which led my wounded spirit from the cruelty of man to the benignity of God—how often did I wish “for the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest!” To be seated at the foot of those sheltering hills which embosomed some mimic habitations, or beneath a mighty elm which rose majestically in the fore-ground of the piece, and spread its thick foliage over a green slope, appeared to me the summit of earthly felicity. Those hills, the torrent-stream which rolled down their steep sides, the shady elm, and all the objects on the tapestry, are indelibly impressed on my memory; and often when I am wandering through the charming scenes of Switzerland, a country which nature seems to have created more for ornament than use, where she has spread over every landscape those lavish graces which in other regions belong only to a few favoured spots, I have felt my eyes bathed in tears, while, amidst views of overwhelming greatness, some minute object unobserved by others has led my imagination to the tapestry and the prison. A few days since I passed along the falls of the Tessino, rolling through narrow cliffs under rocks of the most terrific form, in a succession of torrents, sweeping after each other down the abrupt descent, and broken in their course by enormous fragments torn from the cliffs; sometimes raising their scattered surges into thin air, and sometimes displaying the prismatic colours on the foam. While I was standing on one of those daring bridges that are thrown across the gulph, and that tradition calls the work of supernatural agency, after the first transport of admiration, in which

the mind loses all traces of the past, or thought of the future, had subsided, the torrent-rill which rushed down the Luxembourg tapestry presented itself to my memory, while amidst the pendent groves of pine and fir, bending along the cliffs, and above the sweeping birch which dipped its drooping branches in the surf, I discovered a towering elm, the form of which resembled the friend of my captivity—But how far have I escaped from my prison!—You will forgive this digression: my mind is full of those scenes of beauty and grandeur which have calmed my troubled spirit, and in which I have found a renovation of existence.

I have yet only given you a general outline of our prison; but there was one scene of calamity which myself and my family were alone doomed to witness, and of which our fellow captives had no share. Our apartment, with two others adjoining, was separated from the public room by a little passage, and a door which the huissiers carefully locked at night. It happened that these apartments were then occupied by two persons in whose society we had passed some of the most agreeable hours of our residence in France. These persons were Sillery and La Source, two of the members of the convention, who had been long in close confinement, and who were now on the point of appearing before that sanguinary tribunal whence, after the most shocking mockery of justice, they were inhumanly dragged to the scaffold. Sillery, on account of his infirmities, had with much difficulty obtained permission from the police for his servant to be admitted into the prison during the day, together with an old female friend, who, on the plea of his illness, had implored leave to attend him as his nurse, with that eloquence which belongs to affliction, and which sometimes even the most hardened hearts are unable to resist. While

men assume over our sex so many claims to superiority, let them at least bestow on us the palm of constancy, and allow that in the fidelity of our attachments we have the right of pre-eminence. Those prisons from which men shrunk back with terror, and where they often left their friends abandoned lest they should be involved in their fate—women, in whom the force of sensibility overcame the fears of female weakness, demanded and sometimes obtained permission to visit, in defiance of all the dangers that surrounded their gloomy walls. Sillery's friend and his servant being allowed to go in and out of his apartment, the door was not kept constantly locked, although he and La Source were closely confined, and not permitted to have any communication with the other prisoners. The second night of our abode in the Luxembourg, when the prisoners had retired to their respective chambers, and the keeper had locked the outer door which enclosed our three apartments, La Source entered our room. Oh! how different was this interview from those meetings of social enjoyment that were embellished by the charms of his conversation, always distinguished by a flow of eloquence, and animated by that enthusiastic fervour which peculiarly belonged to his character! La Source was a native of Languedoc, and united with very superior talents, that vivid warmth of imagination for which the southern provinces of France have been renowned since the period when, awakened by the genial influence of those luxuriant regions, the song of the Troubadours burst from the gloom of gothic barbarism. Liberty in the soul of La Source was less a principle than a passion, for his bosom beat high with philanthropy; and in his former situation as a protestant minister he had felt in a peculiar manner

the oppression of the ancient system. His sensibility was acute, and his detestation of the crimes by which the revolution had been sullied, was in proportion to his devoted attachment to its cause. La Source was polite and amiable in his manners: he had a taste for music, and a powerful voice; and sung, as he conversed, with all the energy of feeling. After the day had passed in the fatigue of public debates, he was glad to lay aside the tumult of politics in the evening, for the conversation of some literary men whom he met occasionally at our tea-table. Ah! how little did we then foresee the horrors of that period when we should meet him in the gloom of a prison, a proscribed victim, with whom this melancholy interview was beset with danger!

We were obliged to converse in whispers, while we kept watch successively at the outer door, that if any step approached he might instantly fly to his chamber. He had much to ask, having been three months a close prisoner, and knowing little of what was passing in the world; and though he seemed to forget all the horrors of his situation in the consolation he derived from these moments of confidential conversation, yet he frequently lamented, that this last gleam of pleasure which was shed over his existence was purchased at the price of our captivity. In the solitude of his prison, no voice of friendship, no accents of pity had reached his ear; and after our arrival, he used through the lonely day to count the hours till the prison-gates were closed, till all was still within its walls, and no sound was heard without, except at intervals the hoarse cry of the sentinels, when he hastened to our apartment. The discovery of these visits would indeed have exposed us to the most fatal consequences; but our sympathy prevailed over

our fears; nor could we, whatever might be the event, refuse our devoted friend this last melancholy satisfaction. La Source at his second visit was accompanied by Sillery, the husband of Madame de Sillery, whose writings are so well known in England. Sillery was about sixty years of age; had lived freely, like most men of his former rank in France; and from this dissipated life had more the appearance of age than belonged to his years. His manners retained the elegance, by which that class was distinguished which Mr. Burke has denominated "the Corinthian capital of polished society." Sillery had a fine taste for drawing, and during his confinement displayed the powers of his pencil by tracing beautiful landscapes. He also amused himself by reading history; and, possessing considerable talents for literature, had recorded with a rich warmth of colouring the events of the revolution, in which he had been a distinguished actor, and of which he had treasured up details precious for history. With keen regret he told me that he had committed several volumes of manuscript to the flames, a sad sacrifice to the Omars of the day.

The mind of Sillery was somewhat less fortified against his approaching fate than that of La Source. The old man often turned back on the past and wept, and sometimes enquired with an anxious look, if we believed there was any chance of his deliverance. Alas! I have no words to paint the sensations of those moments!—To know that the days of our fellow captives were numbered—that they were doomed to perish—that the bloody tribunal before which they were going to appear, was but the path-way to the scaffold—to have the painful task of stifling our feelings, while we endeavoured to sooth the weakness of humanity by

hopes which we knew were fallacious, was a species of misery almost insupportable. There were moments indeed, when the task became too painful to be endured. There are moments when, shocked by some new incident of terror, this cruel restraint gave way to uncontrolable emotion; when the tears, the sobbings of convulsive anguish would no longer be suppressed, and our unfortunate friends were obliged to give instead of receiving consolation.

They had in their calamity that support which is of all others the most effectual under misfortune. Religion was in La Source a habit of the mind. Impressed with the most sublime ideas of the Supreme Being, although the ways of heaven never appeared more dark and intricate than in this triumph of guilt over innocence, he reposed with unbounded confidence in that Providence in whose hand are the issues of life and death. Sillery, who had a feeling heart, found devotion the most soothing refuge of affliction. He and La Source composed together a little hymn adapted to a sweet solemn air, which they called their evening service. Every night before we parted they sung this simple dirge in a low tone to prevent their being heard in the other apartments, which made it seem more plaintive. Those mournful sounds, the knell of my departing friends, yet thrill upon my heart!

I.

Calmez nos allarmes,
 Pretez nous les armes,
 Source de vrais biens,
 Brisez nos liens!
 Entende les accens
 De tes enfans

Dans les tourmens ;
Ils souffrent, et leurs larmes
C'est leur seul encens !

II.

Prenez notre défense,
Grand Dieu de l'innocence !
Près de toi toujours
Elle trouve son secours ;
Tu connais nos cœurs,
Et les auteurs
De nos malheurs ;
D'un sort qui t'offense
Détrui la rigueur.

III.

Quand la tyrannie
Frappe notre vie,
Fiers de notre sort,
Méprisant la mort,
Nous te bénissons,
Nous triomphons,
Et nous savons
Qu'un jour la patrie
Vengera nos noms !

THE TRANSLATION.

I.

Calm all the tumults that invade
Our souls, and lend thy pow'rful aid,
Oh ! source of mercy ! sooth our pains,
And break, Oh ! break our cruel chains !
To thee the captive pours his cry,
To thee the mourner loves to fly :
The incense of our tears receive,
'Tis all the incense we can give.

II.

Eternal pow'r, our cause defend;
 Oh God! of innocence the friend!
 Near thee for ever she resides,
 In thee for ever she confides.
 Thou know'st the secrets of the breast,
 Thou know'st th' oppressor and th' oppressed:
 Do thou our wrongs with pity see,
 Avert a doom offending thee!

III.

But should the murderer's arm prevail,
 Should tyranny our lives assail,
 Unmov'd, triumphant, scorning death,
 We'll bless thee with our latest breath.
 The hour, the glorious hour will come
 That consecrates the patriot's tomb;
 And with the pang our memory claims,
 Our country will avenge our names!

La Source often spoke of his wife with tender regret. He had been married only a week, when he was chosen a member of the legislative assembly, and was obliged to hasten to Paris, while his wife remained in Languedoc to take care of an aged mother. When the legislative assembly was dissolved, La Source was immediately elected a member of the national convention, and could find no interval in which to visit his native spot, or his wife, whom he saw no more. In his meditations on the chain of political events, he mentioned one little incident which seemed to hang on his mind with a sort of superstitious feeling. A few days after the 10th of August he dined in the fauxbourg of St. Antoine with several members of the legislative assembly, who were the most distinguished for their talents and patriotism. They were ex-

ulting in the birth of the new republic, and the glorious part they were to act as its founders, when a citizen of the fauxbourg, who had been invited to partake of the repast, observed, that he feared a different destiny awaited them. "As you have been the founders of the republic," said he, "you will also be its victims. In a short time you will be obliged to impose restraints and duties on the people, to whom your enemies and theirs will represent you as having overthrown regal power only to establish your own. You will be accused of aristocracy; and I foresee," he added with much perturbation, "that you will all perish on the scaffold." The company smiled at his singular prediction: but during the ensuing winter, when the storm was gathering over the political horizon, La Source recalled the prophecy, and sometimes reminded Vergniaud of the man of the fauxbourg St. Antoine. Vergniaud had little heeded the augur; but a few days previous to the 31st of May, when the convention was for the first time besieged, La Source said again to Vergniaud, "Well, what think you of the prophet of the fauxbourg?" "The prophet of the fauxbourg," answered Vergniaud, "was in the right."

The morning now arrived when La Source and Sillery, together with nineteen other members of the convention, were led before the revolutionary tribunal. When the guards who were to conduct them arrived, the other prisoners crowded to the public room to see them pass, and we shut ourselves up in our own apartment. They returned about five in the evening; soon after which their counsel arrived, and we had no opportunity of seeing them till midnight, when they related to us what had passed. The conduct of the judges and

the aspect of the jury were calculated to banish every gleam of hope from the bosoms of the prisoners; the former permitted with reluctance any thing to be urged in their defence, and the latter listened with impatience, casting upon their victims looks of atrocity in which they might easily read their fate: yet in spite of these unhappy omens our friends returned from the tribunal with their minds much elevated. La Source described in his eloquent language the noble enthusiasm of liberty, the ardent love of their country, the heroical contempt of death which animated his colleagues, whom he had not seen for some time, since they had been transferred to the Conciergerie, while himself and Sillery had obtained permission to remain at the Luxembourg upon the certificates of their physicians, that they were too ill to be removed without danger. La Source declared that ancient history offered no model of public virtue beyond that which was exhibited by his friends at the tribunal, and who in their prison, blending with the fortitude of Romans the gaiety of Frenchmen, and being confined in one apartment, passed the short interval of life which was left in conversation, and cheerful repasts which were usually concluded with patriotic songs. "You," said Vergniaud to La Source when they met at the tribunal, "you perhaps will find something to regret in the loss of life. You have a glimpse of the gardens of the Luxembourg, which may remind you that there is something beautiful in nature: but we who live in human shambles, who every day see fresh victims dragged to execution, we are become so familiarized with death, that we look on it with unconcern."

A few days before this sanguinary trial ended, the administration of the police sent orders that

the English-women confined in the Luxembourg should be removed the next day to a convent in the fauxbourg St. Antoine. With what keen regret La Source and Sillery received this intelligence! A thousand and a thousand times they thanked us for the dangers we had risked in receiving them, and for the sympathy which had soothed the last hours of their existence—a thousand times they declared, that if it were possible their lives might be preserved, they should consider themselves for ever bound to us by the most sacred ties of gratitude and friendship: but they felt, alas! how small was the chance that we should meet again in this world. Sillery cut off a lock of his white hairs, which he begged I would preserve for his sake, and La Source gave me the same relic. They embraced us with much emotion. They prayed that the blessing of God might be upon us: we mingled our tears together, and parted to meet no more!—

Let me, before I conduct you to our new prison, give you a short account of the political events and their causes, which, after bringing those members of the convention to the scaffold who were most fitted by their talents to defend liberty, and by their moral qualities to make it beloved, ended in such a system of cruelty and crimes, that it can be only by a long perseverance in public virtue that France can make reparation to humanity, or retrieve her character among the nations.

LETTER IV.

THE republican party of the legislative assembly had, it is well known, very early projected many alterations in the new constitution. They had observed with great inquietude the changes which had taken place at the close of the first national assembly, when its labours underwent a revision previously to the acceptance of the constitution by the executive power, and when they found that those who had hitherto been the most strenuous opponents of the court suddenly became its most zealous advocates and friends.

Though this party formed the minority of the legislative assembly, its influence by means of the popular societies was very extensive. But when the struggle took place between the court and the republican party, both of which were at length agreed in the overthrow of the new constitution, with which each was for different reasons equally dissatisfied, the party was joined by many who in this destruction of the regal authority had no other end in view than the establishment of their own.

The society of the Jacobins, which had been for a long time the rival and at length the conqueror of the throne, was deserted immediately after the victory by almost all those who had contributed to gain it. They imagined that every domestic enemy was annihilated when the first decree of the convention changed the monarchy into a republic; and though symptoms of discontent discovered themselves among some who thought that the change had been too hastily decided on, and symp-

toms of a more dangerous and fatal tendency to the welfare of the government had already appeared among others, yet those to whom the people had given their confidence were not sufficiently aware of the instability of popular favour, and the precarious tenure by which they held it. The commune of Paris claimed an equal right to share with the Jacobins the honours of the triumph over royalty; but dissatisfied with the little credit given to the services it had rendered during the struggle, it took advantage of the imbecility of the legislative assembly then expiring, and had already erected itself into a rival power before the convention had opened its first debates. The pretence of making extraordinary exertions to oppose the march of the enemy towards Paris had led the commune, amidst a multiplicity of other acts of rebellion, to arrogate the functions of the representatives of the people; and having at the fatal period of the massacre of September humbled the legislative assembly to the dust, they thought that the same daring conduct would give them the same superiority over the national convention. But in this calculation they were deceived. Robespierre and his adherents, who had hitherto directed their counsels, now aspired to higher destinies; and, though solicitous to make the commune an auxiliary in their designs, were unwilling that it should become their rival. In the new election of representatives, all those were excluded who had been influenced by the court, or who had opposed from purer motives the republican party. Although this party gained a considerable reinforcement by the new election, yet the dread of returning royalty, with all the severity of the old system, had operated so powerfully on the minds of the people of the departments, that many deputies were chosen whose pre-

tensions to this trust arose more from the strength of their lungs than of their talents, and whose harangues made up in noise what they wanted in argument; while the still greater dread of the return of those horrors which the commune had just been exercising had so intimidated the citizens of Paris, that a part of their deputation to the convention, at the head of which was Robespierre, triumphing over the fears they had excited, took their seats rather as the conquerors than the representatives of the people. The conduct of the officers of the municipality, however, called aloud for punishment. It was impossible for the convention to suffer the crimes they had committed, and the still greater atrocities which they had meditated, to pass unnoticed. The council-general of the commune were called to the bar, but escaped justice by dissembled professions of repentance, and the promise of delivering up those who had led them to the commission of such enormities. Had the convention, while its rival was thus subdued, proceeded to distinguish between those who had been the chiefs of the conspiracy and those who had been the dupes of their imposture, they would have done a great act of national justice, and would have crushed any farther attempts against the national honour. But as this humiliation of the commune was a contrivance to escape examination, of which the conspirators who directed its operations, and who had been chosen since to the convention, were afraid; the assembly, deceived by this artifice, had no sooner granted the pardon they implored, than the faction, emboldened by impunity, perceived that with audacity and perseverance they might yet attain the end to which they aspired. While Robespierre sat in the commune, his object was probably to frame a government of municipalities, of which

Paris was to be the chief, and himself the dictator: but his enterprise being encompassed with difficulty, since the people had determined to have a national convention, he afterwards changed his measures, and began to meditate a plan of making the convention itself, of which he was now a member, serve as the instrument of his usurpation.

With this view, he and his disorganizing faction in the convention assumed the direction of the municipality; and as the society of the Jacobins was deserted by the republicans, who thought its services no longer necessary, the name and the place were seized on by the conspirators, and filled with intriguing and ambitious men, whose hopes of sharing in the plunder or the power induced them to become accomplices in the guilt.

While the municipality laboured to win over the sections of Paris, the Jacobins made proselytes to their system of anarchy by their affiliations and correspondence in the departments; and before the existing government was fully aware of the extent of the conspiracy, or could collect sufficient energy to counteract it, the faction had gained a most alarming ascendancy; and although they formed a very small minority in the convention, their influence both in the executive part of the government and amongst the constituted authorities was sufficient to outweigh that of the representation itself. Every concession made to the conspirators served only to increase the insolence of their demands; and although the most eloquent members of the convention, Guadet, Vergniaud, Pethion, Louvet, Brissot and La Source gave incessant warnings of the progress of the anarchists towards the dissolution of all order in the state, yet like Cassandra

they were believed only when the prophecies were fulfilled *.

However criminal this band of conspirators, who have exercised a despotism more hideous than history has ever presented, may appear, or whatever be the regrets we feel for those virtuous friends of liberty who fell the victims of their rage, the historian, more impartial than the friend, will not fail to animadvert on the negligence of which in some instances they were guilty, and above all in carelessly throwing aside, by the desertion of the Jacobin society, the means which they had obtained of informing the public mind and directing its will.

But before we carry our censures too far, we must recollect that they had to contend against men hardened in crimes and inaccessible to shame, who found refuge from the detection of their guilt in the protection of their party, and who returned the thunder of the patriots in the convention by their noisy vociferations at the Jacobins and the commune.

* "Yes," says La Source, "there exists a faction, which seeks to crush the convention and raise the dictatorship on its ruins. This is the faction which has issued its arbitrary mandates, which has ordered the arrest of eight of my colleagues who sat in the legislative assembly, which has paid robbers to plunder and assassins to murder, and which has had the audacity to lay to the charge of the people the crimes which itself has perpetrated. Were I in going from this place to fall under the poniards of these traitors, I should die satisfied in having lifted up the veil which conceals them: a little longer and I will unmask them altogether." Guadet often detailed the conspiracy of the Jacobins and the municipality, and, with bursts of honest indignation against these shameless traitors, implored the convention to save the republic by dissolving the society and re-electing the commune. Vergniaud, with more than usual eloquence, portrayed the conspirators. Louvet gave a clear and admirable detail of their attempts to assassinate the convention in the conspiracy of the 10th of March; and Brissot unveiled their treason not only in the convention and in his journal, but in different publications, of which his address to his constituents published in May 1793 will furnish interesting matter for history.

The first attempt made on the national representation by the commune of Paris and the Jacobins, ought to have been punished as an act of rebellion against the sovereignty of the people. But an ill-judged application of the principles of individual liberty, a too delicate regard for the rights of persons, led on the majority of the convention to the permission of offences, of which they took no measures to stop the progress, till the conspiracy had acquired such strength as made every exertion against it ineffectual.

The treason of Dumourier had furnished the faction with new resources for calumny against the republican party, with some of whom he had formerly been connected: for, as the faction was in the constant habit of denouncing indiscriminately every agent of the republic, the completion of one prophecy gave an air of credit to the rest *. Although the conspirators had acquired considerable influence from the assistance given them by the commune and the Jacobins, they perceived that the object which they had in view, would never fully be attained till they had gained so absolute a controul over the convention, as to make it, like the ancient parliaments, the registers of their imperial edicts. To this end all their efforts were directed: but while those men still sat within its walls whose virtue and eloquence had hitherto warded off the blow which menaced

* The conspirators accused the republicans of being accomplices in Dumourier's treason: the republicans have retorted the charge on some of their adversaries with the most unquestionable evidence. But we need not here recur to conspiracies either of Jacobins or Girondists to discern the motives of Dumourier's conduct. He has endeavoured to explain it himself in his memoirs; to which if any credit ought to be given, the Girondists will be absolved from all share in his treason. But their innocence in this respect, as well as their political integrity in every other, is now established beyond the reach of calumny and detraction.

their country, there was little hope of success. The prize set before these traitors was too great to suffer them to hesitate about the means of seizing it; and having thrown aside all regard to the laws, all respect for individual or political liberty, they conceived the project of violating the national representation itself, and tearing from it the most eloquent and intrepid defenders of its rights. To carry their plot into execution, it was necessary to cover it with the veil of the wish of the people, of whom a few hired desperadoes and other ignorant and seduced persons became the representatives, bearing petitions written by the conspirators themselves, praying the convention to drive from their seats a certain number whom they marked as unworthy of their confidence or that of the nation. The indignation of the convention being roused at these attempts, they instituted a commission of enquiry to search into the causes of this conspiracy. This commission, in pursuance of the powers it had received, after mature examination, arrested Hebert, one of the municipal chiefs, and gave notice to the convention that they were prepared to make their report. The conspirators seeing that their crimes were on the point of being brought to light, the discovery of which would annihilate their project, threw off the mask, and brought forward the commune of Paris to demand not only the dismissal of the commission which the convention had created, but the arrestation of the members who composed it, together with the twenty-two deputies of the convention the most eminent for their virtue and talents. The convention for several days withstood every effort that was made to shake its firmness. The president Isnard, with all the warmth of honest indignation, threatened in the name of the republic the liberticide factioners of the commune,

that if they dared to proceed to the execution of those designs which their present measures indicated, if the national representation should be violated by any of those conspiracies of which they had been the accomplices, that Paris should be blotted out from the rest of its cities, and that the traveller should wander on the banks of the Seine enquiring where it once stood.

The chiefs of the conspiracy had proceeded too far to be stopped in their career by such considerations as these; but they found more intrepidity and firmness in the convention than they expected, and therefore determined to employ their last expedient. The ringing of the tocsin and the firing of alarm guns had excited the attention of the citizens of Paris for two days, when on the third the beating to arms informed them that they were going to be put into insurrection. The national guard being thus put into insurrection, the cause of which was unknown, the whole body were conducted to the hall of the convention, where Henriot the commander of the military force, who had been created by the conspirators for that purpose, had ordered them to assemble. The convention was surrounded till nearly midnight by the military force, nor was any member permitted to leave the hall; but although besieged the assembly was not yet conquered. The day passed in the most frightful tumult, and Rabaut de St. Etienne in vain stood at the tribune, holding in his hand the report of the commission of twelve upon the conspiracy of the commune, together with the proofs of its authenticity. His voice was lost in the horrible vociferations of the tribunes, and the murmurs of the faction within the hall. At length, finding all his efforts ineffectual, he left the assembly in despair.

The assault of the convention on the 31st of May, though it had produced the most horrible disorder, had not forced from the assembly the decree of arrestation. But Robespierre with his commune, his Jacobins, and his body guard of revolutionary women, who were in the van of the attack, and stood in the passages of the convention armed with poniards, which they pointed at the bosoms of such of the deputies as attempted to leave the hall, had gone too far to recede. The first of June they employed in preparations for a fresh attack; and on the second again the tocsin rung, again the whole city was under arms, and the convention was again invested by sixty thousand men.

It does not appear that all the adherents of the conspirators, or rather the different factions in league with them, were acquainted with all the means which Robespierre, Marat, and the municipality, the original authors of the plot, meant to employ. La Croix, a member of the mountain, who had been repulsed in endeavouring to go out of the hall, protested with vehemence against this violation of their liberties; and when Henriot, in receiving orders from the president to draw off his troops, replied, that as soon as he had executed the orders of the people he would obey those of the convention, and threatened that if they refused to deliver up to justice the twenty-two deputies whom he called traitors, he would order the cannon to be fired on the hall; Danton with great indignation imprecated vengeance on the head of the ruffian, which some months after, at the period of his own fall, was in the act of accusation alleged against him as a crime. In vain did the convention, partaking Danton's indignation, hope to obtain their liberty by decreeing that the officers of the post next the entrance of the hall should be called to the bar.

Two of them had received no orders, and a third informed them that he was himself consigned by a few strangers who did not appear to him acquainted even with military forms. These strangers were ordered to the bar; but they refused to attend: and thus this assembly, which talked of nothing less than bringing princes and kings in chains to their feet, were made prisoners in their very sanctuary by a few hirelings, of whom no other description was given than that they were strangers and wore mustaches. This was an indignity not to be borne. The president, therefore, proposed that the assembly in a body should go out of the hall: this was decreed, and the sentinels seeing themselves likely to be overpowered gave way. The deputies paraded in the garden, expecting every moment to be massacred; but the conspirators who directed their motions led them back again to the hall, observing that the convention, after so striking a proof, could have no doubt of their being at liberty.

Previously to this mock parade, Barrere, who had been weighing the probabilities of success on either side, and examining which party would have the ascendancy, at length invited the proscribed deputies, for the sake of peace and for the good of the state, to submit, and devote themselves to their country. To this admonition three of them acceded; but Barbaroux asserted, that he had no right to give in his dismission, nor could he obey any other mandate than that of the people, who having invested him with the power had alone the right to take it from him. With more vehemence Lanjuinais exclaimed, that he would remain at his post to his latest breath, or till he was torn from it by force. His intrepidity provoked the conspirators to rage and tumult. "Citizens," said he, "we have beheld in barbarous countries the people leading hu-

man victims to the altar, after crowning them with flowers; but we never heard, that the priests who were about to sacrifice them treated them with insult. I repeat, that I have no right to lay aside the august character with which the people have honoured me; therefore, expect from me neither self-dismission, nor voluntary suspension for a moment." This courageous reply to their fury appalled the tyrants; and had Vergniaud, Rabaut, Brissot, and others whose names were in the conspirators' list, been then at their post, had they seconded their proscribed colleagues at this critical moment with the thunder of their eloquence, the project of the conspirators might easily have been defeated, and they might have saved both themselves and the republic. While the conspirators were perpetrating this abominable deed, they were deliberating in the house of Guadet about the means that should be taken to avoid it, and deceived by a report which a friend unhappily ill-informed conveyed to them, that the blood of their colleagues was flowing; and believing it to be too late to make any farther struggle, they suffered the decree of arrestation to be carried without opposition*.

* Louvet relates the following singular anecdote: "We began to breathe again, when a man of Bourdeaux, who had been made prisoner at the battle of Nerwinden, and afterwards exchanged, related to Guadet, his friend, that having had an opportunity of forming an intimate acquaintance with one of the officers of the Imperial army, he had learned from him that Cobourg's staff-officers flattered themselves that in a short space of time *twenty-two heads would fall* in the convention. Guadet related to me this anecdote, with which we amused ourselves; but judge of our surprise, and the reflections to which it gave rise, when some time after M. Pache came at the head of the pretended sections of Paris, to present the famous petition which proscribed twenty-two deputies.

"It is important to observe, that this first list of proscription having been composed of *twenty-two* members, the second list, brought some weeks after to the convention by the municipal offi-

Had the convention, when Henriot sent them his mandate, ordered him to be instantly put to death, their orders, if they could have been promulgated out of the precincts of the hall, would undoubtedly have been obeyed; but the conspirators had taken measures to prevent any such transmission, by consigning every officer to his post, by filling up every avenue with their agents, who had received orders to suffer no communication between the hall and the court or garden, and also by closing the gates of the latter, so that the people in general knew nothing of what was passing.

With many others I saw parts of the execution of this conspiracy. I saw the armed force surrounding the hall, but was ignorant, like the rest, of what was passing within. I beheld from a window that overlooked the Tuilleries the convention in full procession; but I could not account for this singular parade, nor was it till midnight that I learned the history of the day, which some of the deputies related to us; among whom was Barrere, who with eyes full of tears lamented to us the fate of his friends, and the total ruin of the republic—that

cers and administrators of Paris, was still *twenty-two*, though all the names were not the same. At the time when the decree of accusation passed, Marat made some changes by his own sovereign authority. He took away some names, that of Lanthenas for example, but he took care to replace them by others, and mark well, in equal number, so that the proscribed were always *twenty-two*. Lastly, when after the taking of Lyons the trial of the republican deputies came on, Pethion, Buzot, Guadet, Salles, Valady, Barbaroux, and myself were not in their hands. The list might consequently have been reduced a third; nevertheless it was still complete, and the victims led to the scaffold were, if not *twenty-two*, at least *twenty-one*. This strange identity of numbers, at four different periods, gave reason to presume that the number of *twenty-two* heads, and always the same number, was what the *mountain* agreed to furnish according to one of its private articles in its treaty with the coalesced powers."

Barrere who a few months after provoked and gloried in their murder !

Liberty, however, did not see her principles and rights abandoned with impunity, but has been terribly avenged. From that fatal decree may be dated all the horrors which have cast their sanguinary cloud over the glories of the revolution, which have given strength to despots and arguments to slaves. The national convention has beheld its members dragged in successive multitudes to the scaffold. The Parisian guard, who submitted to become the passive instruments of this atrocious faction; the citizens of Paris, who bent their necks tamely to the yoke; the departments, who, when they afterwards accepted the constitution, had the baseness to make no conditions for their imprisoned representatives: have seen their fellow-citizens, their friends, their relations, led to death, their property violated, all social ties shaken, virtue every where depressed, vice every where triumphant, and their country one wide scene of calamity, of which the long page of history presents no similar picture, even in the proscriptions of Sylla or the caprices of Caligula *.

* Louvet, in his interesting note, says: " On the 20th of May another plot was to have been executed against the republicans of the convention. Letters had been forged between them and Cobourg. The night of the 20th of May, the twenty-two were to have been arrested as they entered their respective houses, and carried to a house in the fauxbourg Montmartre, where every thing was prepared for the commission of the intended crimes. There each victim was to find a *septembriser*, and they were to be buried in a pit dug in a garden belonging to the house. The next day their emigration was to be announced, and their forged correspondence with Cobourg published. The plan was concerted at the house of Pache the mayor of Paris. The committee of twenty-one had proof of all these atrocities; more than fifty written and subscribed depositions attest the fact; a part of these pieces was in the hands of Berjoing, one of the members of this

Immediately after the insurrection of the 2d of June, an insidious address was published by the committee of public safety to calm the minds, and in their language to enlighten the understanding, of the people. This address was heard with great indignation by the majority of the convention, some of whom protested with vehemence against the state of humiliation to which they were reduced; while others, to give their dissent a more solemn form, assembled and signed individually a protest, in which they detailed the events of the 2d of June, representing in strong colours the despotism which had been exercised, the consequences to which it would lead, and their resolution to take no part in the deliberations of an assembly whose rights had been so shamefully violated*. This protest was signed by seventy-three deputies a few days after the arrest of their colleagues; but it was not then published, since the report promised by the committee of public safety on those who were arrested had not yet been presented; and as this report never appeared, several members of the committee being in the number of the conspirators, the protest was found among the papers of Duperret, and caused the imprisonment of all those who had signed it.

The tidings of the insurrection in Paris occasioned much fermentation in the departments, who were expected to have demanded of the Parisians, in a manner more serious than by address or remonstrance, why the representatives whom they

commission, who had put them into the hands of the administrators of Calvados; but they, at the time they made their peace, did not fail to give them up to the mountain. A more considerable part were in the hands of Rabaut St. Etienne. I do not know whether they have been saved."

* See Appendix, No. I.

had committed to their respect and protection were retained as prisoners and regarded as traitors. The Parisians, who had been altogether passive during this struggle, were not much moved by these menaces. They had beheld with indifference the progress of the contest. Finding themselves delivered from the oppression of the former government; concluding that no tyrant existed except such as bore the name of king; and persuaded that that system could never return, they were careless whether the plain or the mountain, the *côté droit* or *côté gauche* held the reins of government. This fatal error has been the source of almost all the evils that have desolated the republic; for had the Parisians attended to the political duties that were required of them in exchange for their enjoyment of political rights, they would never have seen their fellow-citizens dragged daily through their streets to the scaffold, at the nod of tyrants whom they ought early to have crushed.

During the progress of this conspiracy, the assemblies of the sections where the citizens met to deliberate on public affairs, were either filled by the agents of the conspirators, or governed by the conspirators themselves; and where neither of them had weight sufficient to mislead the citizens, they took advantage of their departure to propose and carry resolutions among themselves, which they proclaimed as the voice of the section. Though these practices were denounced in the convention, and though sometimes the section of to-day came to disclaim what the same section of yesterday had said, yet the discovery of the fraud had no tendency to awaken the citizens to greater vigilance. Had they known to what end all the artifices of the conspirators tended, they would undoubtedly have been on their guard; but as they were made to serve the

views of the traitors in demanding the expulsion of their representatives, without believing that they had committed any crime; so they were also made the instruments of consummating the treason by assisting in the violation of the representation itself in the arbitrary arrest of the deputies, without knowing for what reason they were armed and assembled. A long and mournful experience has at length shewn them, that it is not sufficient to feel the love of liberty without making continual efforts to preserve it; that so many and various are the enemies which it has to combat before its reign can be permanently established, that as much vigilance is required to guard it from the inroads of the aspiring demagogue, as courage to shake off the yoke of despotism; and that when the sacred code of freedom is violated in one point it leads to the destruction of the whole. When the nobles whom the law had confounded in the class of citizens were persecuted as a *cast*, when men of superior abilities became proscribed for "aristocracy of talents," those who were distinguished for neither deceived themselves in believing they were safe.

Although the citizens remained unmoved at these violations, a considerable number of the departments felt the indignity, and prepared to avenge the national honour. Some made eloquent remonstrances at the bar of the convention; some deliberated on the convocation of the primary assemblies; some proposed sending no farther contributions to Paris, while others took arms to suppress the rebellion of the commune against the republic. For some time the arrival of the departmental force was expected; but the conspirators, who foresaw this formidable opposition to the accomplishment of their designs, had the prudence to provide against it by sending previously into the departments, as

many of their emissaries as they could spare without weakening their force at home, taken partly from among their accomplices in the convention, who carried with them the importance of representatives of the people.

The conspirators had also the advantage of being invested with the authority of government, as they had seized on the machine. They had possession of the convention, who were compelled to follow the impulse already given them; they were proprietors of the national wealth, and had the armies at their command. The departments, on the contrary, had no central point of union except the common indignation which the conduct of the conspirators had excited. They had no treasure at their disposal but what arose from voluntary contributions; and while they were deliberating what steps they should pursue, the conspirators, clothed with the national power which they had usurped, reduced the departments to the same state of subjection as they had the convention and Paris. In the western departments, where some of the deputies who were accused had fled, and around whom the people had crowded partaking their indignation, the armies that had hastily assembled as suddenly disappeared; and the whole of the republic except the city of Lyons submitted to the yoke. The causes of this defection, which have hitherto been involved in obscurity, it being the interest of the conspirators to keep them concealed from the world, have lately been developed by one of the principal actors in those memorable scenes, Louvet, deputy of the department of the Loiret, who distinguished himself early in the convention by his accusation of Robespierre, who unmasked the conspiracy of the 10th of March, and who on the 31st of May was honourably proscribed, but is now restored to his

friends and his country. I shall transcribe his own words:

“Guadet and myself reached Caen on the 26th of June. On the 5th of the same month eight departments, namely, five of the former provinces of Brittany and three of Normandy, had entered into a common league. They had just sent their commissaries to Caen, and their troops were at the point of arriving. Wimpfen, the general of the whole force, had hitherto confined all his exploits to travelling about and talking, and under the most frivolous pretences delayed every kind of organisation. As soon as I saw him I was convinced that he was a determined royalist, for he took no pains to conceal it. I asked Barbaroux and Buzot what they could expect from such a man, for the support of our cause. One of them answered me, that Wimpfen was a man of honour, and incapable of breaking his engagements, and the other was altogether captivated by his agreeable manners. Guadet and Pethion, who had just arrived, did not feel my apprehensions. They were astonished at my readiness in suspecting every one that was not as much a republican as myself. From that time I saw that every thing was going the same way at Caen as it had done at Paris. Wimpfen was beloved by the Normans; he had a considerable party among the administrators of Calvados, and had gained the confidence of the Bretons. In order to take the command from him, it was necessary to unite and make use of all our exertions; but I found myself altogether unsupported. Every thing therefore was likely to fail on the side of the republic. Besides, many Normans, who shewed the most favourable dispositions towards us, because in the credit of the news-papers they believed us to be royalists, changed their conduct in the most

pointed manner when by our conversation, and particularly by our actions, they came to know us better. My first hopes were directed therefore towards the south. If my wife had been at Caen, we should have gone aboard some vessel at Honfleur bound to Bourdeaux; and as it would have been very easy for us to have seen whether things went no better there than elsewhere, we should have taken our passage aboard the first American vessel, and have been at this time safe in Philadelphia.

“ Three weeks elapsed, while Wimpfen did nothing but lead to Evreux the two thousand men who had come up from the different departments. In the mean time report had so swelled this little troop, that it was said at Paris to be thirty thousand strong. At this period, the patriots there had recovered from their fears, spoke their opinions publicly, and were preparing to overthrow the terrible municipality. Many sections had already sent their commissaries to Evreux, who had carried back to Paris different publications explanatory of our true sentiments, and particularly a piece which they called, but I know not for what reason, Wimpfen's Manifesto, and which was a declaration of the commissaries of the united departments; a declaration which I had composed with great labour, which breathed only peace, fraternity and assistance to the Parisians, but open war and exemplary punishment to some of the mountain, to the municipality and the cordeliers; and this just distinction had produced the best possible effect in Paris. The commissaries besides had seen and borne their testimonies against the base calumnies which had been uttered against this departmental army, when it was accused of having worn the white cockade, and expressed its wish for royalty. Every thing in

short was so disposed, that if, at this moment, our arms had met but with the slightest success, the revolution would have been effected in Paris, without the interposition of the departmental army; but it was not in this kind of success that Wimpfen was interested.

“The mountain under great apprehensions had at length raised in Paris 1800 foot soldiers, the better half of which were praying for our success, and also seven or eight hundred ruffians as cowardly as they were thievish: this collection had just entered Vernon. Then it was that Wimpfen talked of attacking this town; and here suddenly a Mr. Puysey, of whom we had never heard, was introduced to us by the general, as an officer full of republicanism and knowledge. He it was whom Wimpfen ordered to attack Vernon, and certainly he very well obeyed his secret instructions.

“In order to surprise the enemy, he went out in open day with drums beating. He marched during the extreme heat, and then made his soldiers, who had no tents, and who for the greater part had never been in a camp, pass the night in the open air. He lost the whole of the following day in attacking a small castle, which he had the honour of taking. The enemy having by this time been well and duly informed of all his manœuvres, he, in order to give them still greater advantage, made his troops halt at the entrance of a wood a league distant from Vernon; placed his cannon one piece behind the other along a wall; left all his little army in the greatest disorder; did not even place sentinels; and went to sleep at a cottage at half a league from the place. An hour after, a few hundred men suddenly made their appearance, who surprised our men and fired three rounds of grape shot; but the guns in all probability were charged only

with powder, for there is no doubt that it was but a farce well arranged. However that may be, a rout took place immediately among the soldiers, who did not know with what numbers they had to engage, who could scarcely find their arms, and who were looking about in vain for their commander. This was so expeditious a retreat, that, had it not been for the brave soldiers of the department of the Isle and Vilaine, who stood their ground for some little time, not a single field-piece would have been saved. In short, not a man received the slightest wound: the enemy did not advance thirty steps to follow up their easy victory. This adventure did not hinder Mr. Puyfay, whom the administration of the department of the Eure entreated not to abandon them, from declaring that Eyreux was not tenable; and in reality the next day he withdrew himself sixteen leagues, without striking a blow, and abandoned a whole department to the enemy.

“ On the arrival of the courier who brought us these sad tidings, Wimpfen did not appear at all disconcerted. He moreover assured us that there was nothing unfortunate in this event: he talked of fortifying Caen, of declaring the city in a state of defence, of organizing an army somewhat stronger, and of making paper-money which should be current throughout the seven united departments.

“ These observations afforded room for deep reflection. Salles and myself, after having a long time conversed on the subject, were convinced that the general, so ~~much~~ wishing to march to Paris, intended to keep us shut up with him in the city, where his party was prevalent, to establish a communication with England, and to commit us with that power if it were possible; in fine, to make use

of us according to circumstances, either to make his peace with the mountain if the coalition of the southern departments should be dissolved, or make his peace with the republicans if they should overthrow the mountain. Our colleagues, to whom we communicated our suspicions, thought us visionaries, and nothing less was necessary to convince them than what happened soon after.

"The general requested to have a conference with all of us who were deputies, on an affair of the greatest consequence. He began by describing to us our situation as very critical, unless we took some vigorous resolution. He was going to Lisieux to organise his army, and to form his camp in such a manner as to make at least for some time a proper defence. The future, however, required something more permanent. He returned back to his projects respecting Caen, to his proposals about the creation of paper-money, &c. &c. &c. and as he judged it necessary to support his reasoning by terror, though he ought to have known that such a mode of proceeding would have little influence on men accustomed to brave daily the fury and the murderers of the mountain, an officer, who undoubtedly had been instructed, suddenly entered, and with a frightened look informed the general that there was a riot; that the people had arrested the convoys going to the army; and that they were making violent motions against the deputies. Wimpfen affected to be angry at the precipitation with which he told him this alarming news. It is nothing, said he to the officer; go and talk calmly to the people, make them easy; give them a little money, if it be necessary. When this man left us, the general thought he might venture to make the great proposition. Reflect maturely on all that I have said, resumed he: in order to execute great

projects we must employ great means. But stay, I am going to speak plainly: I see only one possible mode of providing ourselves with men, arms, ammunition, money, and help of every kind; *that is, to negotiate with England; and I myself have the means provided, but I must have your authority, your engagement.*

"The reader may be assured that I have a perfect recollection of the lines I have written in Italics, and I can also assure him that I have stated truly the scene of the preceding passage. It is difficult to paint the effect which these words produced on my too confiding friends. All of them at the same moment, struck with indignation, without any previous consultation rose up. The conference was instantly interrupted, though the general tried every means of renewing it.

"Wimpfen, somewhat disconcerted, left us without seeming to feel any resentment. He only repeated to us that he was going to Lifieux, and insinuated, that in order to restrain some malevolent people who were endeavouring in Caen to render us unpopular, we should all do better to remain in that place. I think that every person must perceive the infamous snare into which this worthy ally of the mountain wished to draw us. Had fear or the desire of vengeance prompted us to accede to this proposition, the republic would have been lost as well as our honour. The mountain would have had victorious proofs against us. It would have been they who were republicans, we that were royalists; and all the republicans persecuted for being royalists, would have been arrested, imprisoned and guillotined. Our conspiracy, they would have said, extended to the south. It would have been we, and not themselves, who delivered Toulon to the English. I know, indeed, that after

their their terrible triumphs they did not fail to make such assertions ; but they found no honest or enlightened man who gave them credit. They were, therefore, driven to their accusation of federalism ; an accusation not less absurd and calumnious.

“ The next day Barbaroux and myself went to Lisieux. The general was somewhat surprised to see us, but he did not receive us with less courtesy. We learned, what he himself took care not to inform us, that he had just had a secret conference with one of the agents of the chiefs of the mountain, who for three weeks past were throwing away handfuls of assignats at Evreux, and every where on their passage ; and who, soon after, probably sure of powerful support, came with the intention of continuing the same plan of corruption at Caen, even under our eyes. We found at Lisieux many people in arms, but no soldiers, no organization, no discipline, and the rage of making motions. A secret hand in a single day disorganized even the *Breton* battalions which had hitherto been firmly united. The general was at pains to make us observe this disorder, and to lead us to conclude from thence that he could not maintain his position there, but that he must march back with all his troops to Caen, and make this city the central point of resistance, &c. He nevertheless avoided repeating to us his English propositions. Accordingly the retreat took place the following day : all my friends then acknowledged that our affairs were ruined in the western departments. In vain did the general, after having gone back to Caen, where he was always desirous of establishing himself, shew dispositions for a serious defence. In vain did he create staff officers, arrange his troops, employ himself in searching for a convenient situation

for encampment, establish batteries of eighteen-pounders: all this parade no longer imposed on our colleagues.

" It appears clear, that Wimpfen, the evening before, had given notice by one of the couriers of the committee of public safety, to the mountain; and I hope that I am understood, when I say the mountain, that is not of the whole body, nor even all its leaders, that I speak, but the principal *cordeliers* of the mountain, such as La Croix, Fabre d'Eglantine, and, who were equally deceiving and shifting between the republicans, Pethion, Guadet, &c. and the dictator Robespierre—that Wimpfen had given information of the bad success of his English overtures, and that it was useless to renew the proposition. It also appears that the mountain then determined to disperse our little band, but without neglecting to throw on our party that colouring of royalism which was so necessary to effect our ruin; and it was without doubt at this period only that they determined to deliver, at least to all appearance, Toulon to the English. What I am now saying will possibly astonish every one who is not well informed as to this business; but when the proper time shall come, I will explain myself fully with respect to this terrible farce of Toulon.

" It is thought that Wimpfen had a safe-conduct from the mountain, and a ready opportunity of going into England; but I know not what became of Mr. Puyfay, who suffered himself to be so complaisantly beaten at Vernon. The administrators of Calvades had given notice to the administration of their shameful defection. They had secretly made their peace with the mountain, without giving us any information. The third day only they made it known to us; and the method

they took was to fend and post up at the gate of the *intendance*, where we lodged, the mountain placard, in which was the decree of our being out of the law."

The counterpart of the scene acted at Paris, between the conspirators and the convention, was attempted at Lyons, and the same day was appointed in both cities for the accomplishment of their purpose. At the head of this provincial conspiracy was a man named Chalier, a Piedmontais by birth (for most of the agents of the conspirators were foreigners) and a sharper by profession, having fled his own country on account of having committed fraudulent bankruptcies. He was sent to Lyons by the commune of Paris, after the massacre of September, and opened his mission by the murder of nine persons who had been committed to prison by the municipality of Lyons for slight offences. Agreeably to the instructions he had received, and in conformity to the general plan which the commune of Paris and the conspirators had formed, their apostle laboured incessantly to propagate the doctrines of robbery, rebellion and murder. Seeing that these exhortations had been attended with their due effects in Paris, "the needy villain's general home," where the promise of riches without labour had alured all the idle and profligate to the standard of the conspirators, he was disappointed that more profelytes to this seducing system had not honoured his embassy at Lyons, where society was less disunited, and where industry had established a superstitious regard to property, altogether incompatible with Chalier's system of reform. A few, however, he found who listened to his projects, and to those he communicated his plan of regeneration, which consisted in placing a guillotine the following day on one of the bridges, where all

the capital merchants, who were necessarily aristocrats, were to be executed, and their bodies thrown into the Rhone. Though this secret was imparted under the solemnity of an oath, yet there were some who touched with remorse gave private notice of it to the citizens, who took measures to prevent its execution.

Chalier, who ought instantly to have been put to death by the just indignation of the people, was suffered to continue his revolutionary projects, to the great annoyance of the wealthy citizens, against whom his attacks were continually directed. By perseverance he had at length formed a set out of the profligate which are to be found in all large communities, and with their aid he was encouraged to attempt once more the accomplishment of his designs.

He had been appointed procureur of the commune; and as the municipality were composed of Jacobins, and of others as weak as those were wicked, Chalier, supported by the faction of Paris, became its principal director. Knowing the progress of the conspiracy in that city, he prepared his friends for the same events at Lyons, by declaring openly in the popular society on the 27th of May, that the presidents and secretaries of the sections, together with the rich *egotists*, should be beheaded on the following day. The municipality on the 26th, influenced by Chalier, had levied a revolutionary tax of six millions of livres on the rich, to be paid in twenty-four hours. This municipal levy excited murmurs as was expected, and gave the anarchists pretences for raising tumults. The rich were destined to be the victims, and Chalier's band prepared themselves to be the executioners. But the Lyonnais might have crushed this insurrection in its birth, had not the narrow spirit of traffic,

which sees nothing beneficial in society except the accumulation of wealth, made them feel that their country was but a secondary object, and fitted only to employ the attention of those whose time was of less mercantile profit than their own.

Apprised of the intentions of the conspirators, who had made out the list of the proscriptions, and arranged the plan of the massacre, the citizens flew to arms, and seized on the arsenal. The conspirators kept possession of the town-hall, and both parties prepared for action; for Lyons now consisted only of those who intended to murder, and those who did not like to be murdered. The combat was vigorously supported on both sides; for the conspirators were aided by a party of military whom they had previously engaged in their interests. Victory remained doubtful for a long time, as the battle was fought in the streets of the city, one quarter being in the possession of the conspirators, while the republicans were masters of the other. It was not till midnight that the citizens took the town-hall, which was the head quarters of Châlier's party. This event decided the contest, which had been severe and bloody. The conspirators were imprisoned, and their chief, after a long and formal trial, was condemned by the tribunal to death. Had the same resistance been made to oppression in other communes, that of Paris would have been compelled to submit to the general will; but as the departments had declined the contest, Lyons was left to withstand alone all the resentment of the conspirators, and was besieged a few weeks after this period.

LETTER V.

THE chief point of accusation against the deputies who were arrested on the second of June, was the continued opposition which they were accused of having made to the formation of a republican constitution. This calumny was contradicted by the fact; the proscribed deputies having, after the labour of some months, presented a plan of constitution to the convention, which had been published by its order; but of which it was a part of the conspirators' plan to interrupt and prevent the discussion.

As many believed that a constitution was the remedy for every evil, moral and political, and even physical, that afflicted the state; and that, when once prepared and administered, all its maladies would be cured; some of the departments were appeased by the assurance that their present rulers would give them in a fortnight what they were made to believe their predecessors had so long withheld.

The appearance of this constitution within the appointed time tended greatly to allay the discontents, and gave an air of popularity to the proceedings of the conspirators; for, as long as the people obtained the blessing, they were indifferent from what hand they received it. They were little aware of the purposes of their tyrants, who only giving them one short glimpse of this wished-for constitution, and having obtained their sanction of it, threw it aside, locked up this hallowed book of the law, shrowded with a dark veil the tables of the rights of man, and boldly proclaimed a new-invented species

of tyranny, under the denomination of revolutionary government. That epithet has since justified every enormity, warranted the violation of every principle: and theft and pillage, noyades and fusilades have all received the common appellation of revolutionary measures.

What contributed also to dissipate the storm that was going to be poured on Paris, was the dread which the departments themselves had of extending the civil war, which then raged in the country south of the Loire, when there was a possibility of attaining by milder means the objects they had in view, the re-establishment of their representatives, and confining the extravagant power of the commune of Paris within its just bounds. What also misled them was, the subjection to which Paris itself was reduced, and which, deceived by addresses from the convention and the commune, they mistook for the enjoyment of tranquillity; and what finished the contest was the thunder of the conspirators hurled against the departments which had shewn most zeal in favour of the imprisoned deputies, the the constituted powers of which were dissolved by the convention, and its members declared guilty of acts of rebellion. It was fortunate for the usurpers, that this almost general and speedy acquiescence took place; as, independently of the coalesced powers, they had a most formidable enemy to contend with in the royalists of the Vendée, who, while these struggles for power convulsed Paris, were organizing a force that, but for the invincible spirit of liberty that inspired the immense majority of the republic, was calculated to overwhelm every contending party, and bring back the antient despotism with all the avenging terrors of sacerdotal and aristocratical rage.

The country which was the scene of this insurrection in favour of priesthood and royalty, is situated between the Loire and the Charente, stretching along the coasts between the two rivers, and making part of the territory which was called, under the ancient government, the province of Poitou. It is a country fertile both in corn and pasture; and from its rich abundance distributed plenty to most of the neighbouring departments, and furnished even to the centre of France a considerable part of its supplies. Where nature had done so much to make this region the seat of plenty, the inhabitant was not solicitous to increase his riches by foreign traffic; so that commerce contributed but little to his opulence, and manufacturers were almost unknown. However innocent and pastoral the life of the shepherd and the husbandman has been represented, and however productive of those vices that corrupt and enervate mankind the commercial intercourse between nations may have been found; this communication brings with it an interchange of knowledge and manners which improves and embellishes society, while the permanent habitudes of the former serve to retain him in a state which adds nothing to the common stock of knowledge, and contributes nothing to the progressive improvement of the world. The negative merit of exemption from vices to which we have never been tempted, may be granted to this intellectual darkness, where it is placed beyond the reach of endangering more enlightened society; but when ignorance becomes the sport of fanaticism, and ambitious men make it the instrument of their guilty designs, it becomes a calamity the most terrible in the list of human evils.

The department of the Vendée, from its local situation, had little other intercourse with the rest of the republic than what arose from the export of the

superfluity of its produce ; and while the great and immortal principles which directed the revolution awakened in the bosom of every mechanic and peasant throughout France the noble sentiment that no man was superior to him in his rights, the Vendéan, who had only heard of these things through the organ of the noble and the priest, remained the implicit believer and obedient vassal, while his fellow-citizens were rejoicing in their emancipation.

In this insulated department the feudal system had been maintained in all its rigour. The provincial laws of Brittany, which, from the minuteness and singularity of their oppression, would be rather subjects of ridicule than abhorrence, had they not contributed so much to the degradation of the human character in the tyrant who inflicted and the slave who suffered them, were incorporated with other laws equally barbarous, and peculiar to the country.

As this part of the republic, from its geographical and moral situation, had received but a few faint rays of the light of that liberty which had burst forth in France ; and as already the seeds of discord had been plentifully scattered among the inhabitants by the fanatical clergy, it was fitted to become the retreat of all who were averse to the new order of public affairs. Accordingly the nobles and the priests, who, in the first meetings of the constituent assembly, discovered, that by the removal of those factious barriers by which they had hitherto been separated from the other classes of the people, they were now to mingle in the common mass, found refuge in these departments, where they trusted that those distinctions might still be respected which had elsewhere sunk into contempt. Their influence was extensive ; and as their zeal was quickened by implacable resentment, those laws of which they could not hinder the promulgation, and

particularly those which respected their own orders, were but imperfectly executed, or apparently obeyed. Having found that that enthusiasm which led the constituent assembly to overthrow these gigantic privileges, had considerably evaporated towards its close; and seeing also that the court, in struggling to regain its lost power, sought their alliance; they grew bolder in their pretensions, and became more active in their hatred towards the establishment of the new government. At first an air of general discontent overspread this part of the country—partial fermentations next succeeded, and the spirit of insurrection at length became so general, that the constituent assembly was compelled to take measures to stop its alarming progress.

The means employed by the legislature were calculated rather to increase than prevent the evil; for, instead of sending commissaries from their own body to examine into its causes; instead of enlightening the people, and unmasking and punishing those who had prompted them to rebellion; they entrusted the court with the execution of their decrees, and, as it might have been expected, the insurrection obtained additional force, and even a sort of royal sanction.

The authority of the next assembly was insufficient to repress so alarming an evil. Too much divided by the spirit of party, and too much occupied in struggles against the court, the legislative assembly for a long time applied only palliatives to the disease; nor, till it wore an aspect dangerous to the existence of the revolution, was the assembly roused to the application of any effective remedy. The measure they first proposed was the banishment of the priests who had refused adherence to the new constitution; but this measure appeared so alarming to the court, and so destructive of the system it had

adopted to regain its lost influence, that the king was advised to make use of the repressive power which the constitution gave him, and to refuse his royal sanction. Though this refusal hastened the destruction of the court, already tottering, it gave new courage to the discontented, who, finding themselves so zealously supported, burst into open resistance in the Vendée and the neighbouring departments, which it required all the exertion of the departmental force to suppress.

The fall of the court suspended for a time the progress of this insurrection; but the unhappy auspices under which the convention met, inspired fresh ardour, and led the insurgents to new exertions. In hopes of restoring the monarchy, a vast plan of insurrection was formed, which not only comprehended the Vendée and the adjoining departments, but extended itself through a great part of Brittany. The convention was too much occupied in resisting the conspirators at Paris to attend to the progress of the royalists, who were suffered to take uninterrupted possession of the Vendée and the neighbouring departments. Before the end of March they had organized an army of 40,000 men, consisting chiefly of peasants, servants of the former nobility, smugglers, poachers and game-keepers, men well accustomed to the use of arms, and had begun their march towards Paris before the convention were formally advised that any insurrection had taken place. Their army was commanded by experienced chiefs who had served under the antient government: but what gave the rebellion its fiercest rage was the fanaticism which the priest inspired, who marching at the head of their columns, bearing the crucifix in his hand, pointed out to his followers the road to victory or heaven. The progress which the royalists had made before any force was opposed to

them was so alarming, that at the period when the Jacobins had seized upon the government at Paris, the portion of the country which the Vendéens had subdued was so extensive, that it seemed doubtful of which party France was destined to be the prey. The royalists had entire possession of the Loire almost as far as Paris, and menaced Rochelle on the one side while they besieged Nantes on the other, and opened a passage into the departments which made part of the former province of Brittany.

The faction at Paris did not fail to improve the events of the Vendée to their own advantage. Pethion, Buzot, Rabaud St. Etienne, Isnard, Lanjuinais, Barbaroux, Guadet, Louvet and others of the proscribed deputies having made their escape, the conspirators declared, in an address to the departments, that the project of the deputies who were still in arrestation was evidently the same as that of their colleagues, who were gone to facilitate the march of the rebels, and aid them in the establishment of the royal power. This calumny, which was refuted by every address received from the departments*, formed the basis of the accusation which was framed against the Gironde; and the founders and most strenuous supporters of the republic were soon after dragged to the scaffold as the advocates and protectors of royalty.

In proportion as the departments relaxed in their energy, the ferocity of the conspirators increased. An event also happened at this period, which, from the calumnies to which it gave rise, and the consequences it produced, proved fatal to the arrested deputies. This was the assassination of Marat. In the first dawn of the conspiracy Marat became a principal instrument in the hands of the traitors,

* See Appendix, No. II.

who found him well fitted for their purposes ; and being saved from the punishment which usually follows personal insult by the contempt which the deformity and diminutiveness of his person excited, he became the habitual retailer of all the falsehoods and calumnies which were invented by his party against every man of influence or reputation. He was the Thersites of the convention, whom no one would deign to chastise ; for his extravagance made his employers often disclaim him as a fool, while the general sentiment he excited was the sort of antipathy we feel for a loathsome reptile. His political sentiments often varied ; for he sometimes exhorted the choice of a chief, and sometimes made declamations in favour of a limited monarchy ; but what rendered him useful to the conspirators was his readiness to publish every slander which they framed, and to exhort to every horror which they meditated.—His rage for denunciation was so great that he became the dupe of the idle ; and his daily paper contains the names of great criminals who existed only in the imagination of those who imposed on his credulous malignity.

After this first preacher of blood had performed the part allotted to him in the plan of evil, he was confined to his chamber by a lingering disease to which he was subject, and of which he would probably soon have died. But he was assassinated in his bath by a young woman who had travelled with this intention from Caen in Normandy. Charlotte Anne Marie Corday was a native of St. Saturnin in the department of the Orne. She appears to have lived in a state of literary retirement with her father, and by the study of antient and modern historians to have imbibed a strong attachment to liberty. She had been accustomed to assimilate certain periods of ancient history with the events that

were passing before her, and was probably excited by the examples of antiquity to the commission of a deed, which she believed with fond enthusiasm would deliver and save her country.

Being at Caen when the citizens of the department were enrolling themselves to march to the relief of the convention, the animation with which she saw them devoting their lives to their country, led her to execute, without delay, the project she had formed*. Under pretence of going home, she came to Paris, and the third day after her arrival obtained admission to Marat. She had invented a story to deceive him; and when he promised her that all the promoters of the insurrection in the departments should be sent to the guillotine, she drew out a knife which she had purchased for the occasion, and plunged it into his breast.

She was immediately apprehended, and conducted to the Abbaye prison, from which she was trans-

* Louvet speaks of this extraordinary woman in the following terms:—"A young person came to speak to Barbaroux at the Intendance where we all lodged. She was tall and well shaped, of the most graceful manners and modest demeanour; there was in her countenance, which was beautiful and engaging, and in all her movements, a mixture of softness and dignity, which were evident indications of a heavenly mind. She came always attended by a servant, and waited for Barbaroux in an apartment through which we passed frequently. Since this young woman has fixed on herself the attention of the world, we have each of us recollected the circumstances of her visits, of which it is now clear that some favour solicited for a friend was only a pretence. Her true motive undoubtedly was to become acquainted with some of the founders of the republic, for which she was going to devote herself; and perhaps she was desirous that at some future day her features should be brought to their recollection.

"I declare and solemnly attest, that she never communicated to us a word of her design; and if such actions could be directed, and she had consulted us, would it have been against Marat that we should have pointed her stroke? Did we not know that he was then languishing under a fatal disease; and had but a few days to live?"

ferred to the Conciergerie, and brought before the revolutionary tribunal.

She acknowledged the deed, and justified it by asserting that it was a duty she owed her country and mankind to rid the world of a monster, whose sanguinary doctrines were framed to involve the country in anarchy and civil war, and asserted her right to put Marat to death as a convict already condemned by the public opinion. She trusted that her example would inspire the people with that energy which had been at all times the distinguished characteristic of republicans; and which she defined to be that devotedness to our country which renders life of little comparative estimation.

Her deportment during the trial was modest and dignified. There was so engaging a softness in her countenance, that it was difficult to conceive how she could have armed herself with sufficient intrepidity to execute the deed. Her answers to the interrogatories of the court were full of point and energy. She sometimes surprised the audience by her wit, and excited their admiration by her eloquence. Her face sometimes beamed with sublimity, and was sometimes covered with smiles. At the close of her trial she took three letters from her bosom, and presented them to the judges, and requested they might be forwarded to the persons to whom they were addressed. Two were written to Barbaroux, in which with great ease and spirit she relates her adventures from her leaving Caen to the morning of her trial. The other was an affectionate and solemn adieu to her father. She retired while the jury deliberated on their verdict; and when she again entered the tribunal there was a majestic solemnity in her demeanour which perfectly became her situation. She heard her sentence with attention and composure; and after con-

verfing for a few minutes with her counfel and a friend of mine who had fat near her during the trial, and whom fhe requested to difcharge fome trifling debts fhe had incurred in the prifon, fhe left the court with the fame ferenity, and prepared herfelf for the laft fcene.

She had concluded her letter to her father with this verfe of Corneille,

“ C’eft le crime qui fait la honte, et non pas l’échafaud,”

and it is difficult to conceive the kind of heroifm which fhe difplayed in the way to execution. The women who were called furies of the guillotine, and who had afsembled to infult her on leaving the prifon, were awed into filence by her demeanour, while fome of the fpectators uncovered their heads before her, and others gave loud tokens of applaufe. There was fuch an air of chaftened exultation thrown over her countenance, that fhe infpired fentiments of love rather than fenfations of pity*. She afcended the fcaffold with undaunted firmnefs,

* She excited in this interefting fituation a very ftrong and fingular paffion in a young man of the name of Adam Lux, a commiffary from Mayence. He accidentally croffed the ftreets fhe was paffing in her way to execution, and became infantly enamoured not of her only, but, what was more extraordinary, of the guillotine. He publifhed a few days after a pamphlet, in which he propofed raifing a ftatue to her honour, and infcribing on the pedeftal “ *Greater than Brutus*,” and invoked her fhade wandering through Elyfium with thofe glorious perfonages who had devoted themfelves for their country. He was fent to the prifon of the Force, where a friend of mine often faw him, and where he talked of nothing to him but of Charlotte Corday and the guillotine; which, fince fhe had perifhed, appeared to him transformed into an altar, on which he would confider it as a privilege to be facrificed, and was only follicitous to receive the ftroke of death from the identical inftrument by which fhe had fuffered. A few weeks after his imprifonment he was executed as a counter-revolutionift.

and, knowing that she had only to die, was resolved to die with dignity. She had learned from her jailor the mode of punishment, but was not instructed in the detail; and when the executioner attempted to tie her feet to the plank, she resisted, from an apprehension that he had been ordered to insult her; but on his explaining himself she submitted with a smile. When he took off her handkerchief, the moment before she bent under the fatal stroke, she blushed deeply; and her head, which was held up to the multitude the moment after, exhibited this last impression of offended modesty.

The leaders of the faction, who thought every measure good that could be made subservient to their purpose, found this event too replete with favourable circumstances to be neglected. Marat, whom they had thrown aside to die at leisure, unless perchance he should have lived to share the fate to which they afterwards condemned their other agents, was now restored to more than his antient honours, was proclaimed a martyr, and his death ordered to be lamented as an irreparable loss to the republic. The conspirators declared that no farther doubt of the federalism of the departments remained. The death of Marat was the point of conviction. Every member of the mountain was to be assassinated in his turn, and the traitors of the departments had their accomplices in Paris who had whetted their poinards to involve the city in destruction. Though the Parisians were not sufficiently credulous to believe these calumnies, the faction made them the pretence to proceed to the farther commission of crimes; and while they endeavoured to amuse the people with what they called the inauguration of Marat and of Châlier,

they were meditating the murder of the deputies whom they had driven from the legislature.

It was impossible to contemplate without indignation and despair that glorious revolution, which had opened to mankind the brightest prospects of happiness, and which had promised the most beneficial effects to the world, become the sport of the cruel, and the prey of the rapacious; to see a people who were called to liberty, bending their necks, like the votaries of the storied assassin of the mountain, at the nod of their tyrant; to see a nation which had possessed Rousseau, Mably and Voltaire, prostrate in frantic enthusiasm before the shrine of Marat, like the idolaters of Montapama, whose devotion rose in proportion to the hideousness of their gods.

Every day some pretended plot was discovered, some dark conspiracy, attributed successively to nobles, priests, bankers and foreigners, was dragged to light; but the specimens produced of these counter-revolutionary projects were often such as did little honour to the invention of those by whom they were exhibited. Sometimes letters were found from agents of the coalesced powers; but they were generally so ill fabricated that they only deceived those who could not read them.

The departments having submitted to the usurpers, they now began their measures of severity against those who had resisted their authority. The general denomination for disaffection to their principles was that of being suspected; and accordingly a decree was issued to arrest all those who came under this title. The revolutionary tribunal not having all the energy necessary to carry into execution the plans that were meditating, was denounced for its *moderantism*, and the members of which it was composed, renewed.

A certain class of the women of Paris, who gave themselves the title of revolutionary women, had been serviceable auxiliaries to the conspirators, and had taken place of the poissards, who not having all the energy which the present exigencies required, had yielded the palm to their revolutionary successors. These female politicians held deliberative assemblies, and afterwards presented their views to the convention, while they influenced its debates by their vociferations in the tribunes, which they now exclusively occupied. On the days of tumult which preceded the 31st of May they had mounted guard in person at the convention, and prevented the execution of certain orders which they disliked. They now presented themselves at the bar of the assembly, and demanded the exclusion of the former nobles from every function civil or military, the renewal of all the administrations throughout the republic, the examination of the conduct of the ministers, the arrest of every suspected person, the raising of the whole nation in a mass, and obliging the women to wear red caps. The convention having shewn some disinclination to comply with these modest requisitions, these female politicians insulted some of the members, and the society was dissolved by a decree.

In the mean time the royalists had proceeded almost as far as Tours on their way to Paris. Lyons was in a state of formidable resistance. The Marseillois were at Avignon. Mentz surrendered to the Prussians. The province of Alsace was over-run by the Austrians. Valenciennes was taken after a formidable siege, and Cambray was summoned to surrender. The Piedmontese had invaded the department of Montblanc, formerly Savoy, the Spaniards had invested Perpignan, and the English were masters of Toulon.

More efficient measures became necessary than had hitherto been employed, and that which was now adopted was putting into requisition every individual that could be made useful to his country in any situation in which his services were claimed. That part of the community which was destined to the most active service were the young men from 18 to 25 years of age, who under the name of the first requisition were immediately invested with the title of the defenders of their country, and, as soon as arms were procured, sent to the frontiers.

Whatever may be the difference of political opinion respecting the events of the French revolution, there can be no dissenting voice against the tribute of honour and applause which belongs to the armies of the republic. Amidst all the internal commotions of contending chiefs, regardless of plain or mountain, of *côté droit* or *côté gauche*, they saw their country invaded, and bravely repulsed the attack, leaving the arrangement of the internal concerns of the state to the individuals who were left behind. They were not of that class which composes the usual mass of armies, the idle and the profligate, who seek a refuge from industry or want in the vocation of a soldier; and they were of that age when the love of military glory and the passion for liberty are felt with the greatest ardour. This passion was nourished by the consciousness that their sections, their communes, the convention, and their country were looking on them with fond and anxious expectation, and the decrees which declared that they deserved well of the republic animated them with a more ardent desire to merit the eulogium.

One of the great springs which mechanically inspired courage and resolution, was the patriotic

songs and hymns which were continually resounding through their camps. But the great moral motive that urged them to valorous deeds, was that contempt of death which men in all ages, who combat for liberty and their country, have felt, and this was a motive which their antagonists could not feel. The soldier was conscious that, if he survived, he should partake of the honour he had laboured to acquire; and if he died, that his country would enroll his name among those of its deliverers, and that his fate would inspire that sentiment which our animated poet has so beautifully described in his ode on the glorious dead.

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest?
When Spring with dewy fingers cold
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod:
By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By fairy forms their dirge is sung:
There Honour comes a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay:
And Freedom shall a while repair
To dwell a weeping hermit there.

"But the life of a modern soldier," Dr. Johnson has observed, "is ill represented by heroic fiction. War has means of destruction more formidable than the cannon and the sword. Of the thousands and ten thousands that perished in our late contest with France and Spain, a very small part ever felt the stroke of an enemy. The rest languished in tents and ships, amidst damps and putrefaction, pale, torpid, spiritless and helpless, gasping and groaning, unpitied among men made obdu-

rate by long continuance of helpless misery, and were at last whelmed in pits or heaved into the ocean without notice and without remembrance. By incommodious encampments and unwholesome stations, where courage is useless and enterprise impracticable, fleets are silently dispeopled, and armies sluggishly melted away."

From this devastation of disease the French have been exempted; for the evils which Dr. Johnson enumerates most commonly proceed from the absence of those conveniencies which money can procure. But a great part of the first requisition, which was taken from the class of the rich as well as of the poor, were enabled, by the attention of their friends, and the expenditure of their own income, to procure not only the means of plenty to themselves, but to contribute to the accommodation of their less wealthy companions.

LETTER VI.

THE usurpers saw that those young citizens who had obeyed with alacrity the call of the convention against the common enemy were not fitted to be the instruments of these revolutionary projects. Revolutionary committees had been established in every commune of the departments, and in every section of Paris; but though the last were in general composed of the creatures of the faction, they were not so secure of what they called the *energy* of the committees in the country. For this reason, a certain number of what was termed the most *fansculottide*

and revolutionary citizens of each section of Paris were chosen by their respective committees to compose a body of six thousand men, which was called the revolutionary army, and which, accompanied by a * guillotine ambulante, was to issue forth from Paris into the departments, to invite the people to raise themselves to the height of the revolution.

In the mean while, the usurpers framed an act of accusation against the deputies whom they had driven from the convention on the 31st of May, and arrested the seventy-three members who had protested against that measure. At this period also the vague report of a spy, that Beauvais a deputy of the convention had been put to death by the English at Toulon, served as a pretext to the usurpers for inflicting twenty years imprisonment on whoever should introduce English merchandize into the republic, and for throwing into prison and confiscating the property of all those who had been born in the British dominions, except such as were employed in manufactures. This impolitic and savage decree, in open violation of the rights of nations, and breach of that hospitality under the protection of which but a few months before they had invited the English then in France to remain among them, was put into execution; and though it met with universal reprobation, yet as terror was the order of the day, no one felt himself sufficiently bold to demand its repeal; and as business of more importance lay before the conspirators than the consideration of the cases of individuals, those who had the credulity to trust to their protection were left to ruminate on their injustice.

The next step taken by the conspirators was that of throwing aside the incumbrance of the constitution.

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* A travelling guillotine.

on. A report was accordingly prepared, shewing the impossibility of conducting the machine of the revolution without the use of extraordinary measures, and the convention voted without discussion, that the constitution should be set aside, and that the government should become revolutionary. The superiority of a monarchical over a republican government has been said to consist in the unity of its action, particularly in cases of danger. The Romans in time of great public calamity were accustomed to throw a veil over the tables of the laws, and place in the hands of one of their fellow-citizens, whom they called a Dictator, the whole energy of the government, as long as the danger which threatened the state should exist. Rousseau admires this policy, and recommends it in similar cases to all free governments. Of whatever advantage the temporary absence of liberty might have been, had the people of France, like the Romans, chosen those to rule the storm who had the greatest skill or the most acknowledged virtue; those sanguinary and ferocious characters who now seized on the power, instead of making this temporary despotism a means of saving the country, like the malevolent genii who preside over evil, filled it with horror, desolation, and death.

To reconcile the nation to the assumption of their new power, the conspirators thought it necessary to shew their distinguishing attachment to what they called the people by the exercise of every kind of persecution against what they called aristocracy, an appellation by no means confined to the adherents of the former court or the nobility. To the "aristocracy of talents" succeeded the "aristocracy of commerce," which signified that he who enriched himself while he enriched his country by the supply of its wants, was an object of suspicion, or a coun-

ter-revolutionist. They therefore conceived the project of reducing every article of merchandize and subsistence to what they called the *maximum*, and obliged every merchant and shop-keeper to sell his goods to the public at the prescribed rate, whatever might have been the first cost. Though it was evident to the most superficial observer, that such a measure must be eventually destructive of commerce, and productive of the evil it was intended to prevent; yet, as it was an evil that but remotely affected the consumer, it was calculated to please the lower class of people.

The faction, armed with the absolute power they had usurped, fancied they could controll all possible circumstances; and though they could not but perceive that the manufacturer must necessarily cease his labour when the new materials exceeded the stated price of the goods he exposed to sale, and that the merchant could no longer go on with his commerce, when the cargo which he had purchased abroad was struck with the revolutionary *maximum* on its entrance into port; though they could not but see that it was a law fraught with every evil, yet as it was a blow at the aristocracy of commerce, and a revolutionary measure, it was proposed and adopted.

While they were thus persuading the people what interest they took in their welfare by the introduction of plenty, in the extinction of monopolies, and the reduction of the price of merchandize, they were equally solicitous to shew their regard for the public safety by the punishment of traitors and conspirators. For a long time the Jacobins had demanded the trial of Maria Antoinette, whose existence they declared endangered that of the republic. She was accordingly arraigned for having

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committed a series of crimes, which in the language of the indictment comprehended not merely counter-revolutionary projects, but all the enormities of the Messalinas, Brunehauts, Fredegondes, and Medici. A curious account of the evidence in support of these charges, and the effect which her behaviour produced upon Robespierre, is given by Vilate, a young man of the revolutionary tribunal. The scene passed during the trial, at a tavern near the Tuilleries, where he was invited to dine with Robespierre, Barrere, and St. Just. "Seated around the table," he says, "in a close and retired room, they asked me to give them some leading features of the evidence on the trial of the Austrian. I did not forget that expostulation of insulted nature when, Hebert accusing Antoinette of having committed the most shocking crime, she turned with dignity towards the audience, and said, "I appeal to the conscience and feelings of every mother present, to declare if there be one amongst them who does not shudder at the idea of such horrors." Robespierre, struck with this answer as by an electrical stroke, broke his plate with his fork. "That blockhead Hebert!" cried he, "as if it were not enough that she was really a Messalina, he must make her an Agrippina also, and furnish her with the triumph of exciting the sympathy of the public in her last moments."

Marie Antoinette made no defence, and called no witnesses, alleging that no positive fact had been produced against her. She had preserved an uniform behaviour during the whole of her trial, except when a starting tear accompanied her answer to Hebert. She was condemned about four in the morning, and heard her sentence with composure. But her firmness forsook her in the way from the court to her dungeon—she burst into tears; when,

as if ashamed of this weakness, she observed to her guards, that though she wept at that moment, they should see her go to the scaffold without shedding a tear.

In her way to execution, where she was taken after the accustomed manner in a cart, with her hands tied behind her, she paid little attention to the priest who attended her, and still less to the surrounding multitude. Her eyes, though bent on vacancy, did not conceal the emotion that was labouring at her heart—her cheeks were sometimes in a singular manner streaked with red, and sometimes overspread with deadly paleness; but her general look was that of indignant sorrow. She reached the place of execution about noon; and when she turned her eyes towards the gardens and the palace, she became visibly agitated. She ascended the scaffold with precipitation, and her head was in a moment held up to the people by the executioner.

The trial of Marie Antoinette was followed by that of the accused deputies. Although those guardians of the public weal, the Jacobins, had repeatedly urged the convention to bring forward their trial, it had been long delayed from the difficulty of finding any proofs that wore the appearance of probability; and it remained long undecided what should be the charges, and who should be the victims. The substance of the accusation was at length founded on a sort of sportive party romance written by Camille Desmoulins on Brissot and the Brissotins; and what was meant by the author merely to excite a laugh, was distorted to serve this horrible purpose. Camille, it is said, remonstrated loudly on this perversion of his intentions, and disclaimed any participation in the guilt. He declared that the charges were only extravagancies of his

own imagination, and that he could not support any of them by evidence. This remonstrance was ineffectual, and the romance formed part of the indictment, which was filled up with charges of royalism and federalism; which being presented to the assembly for their sanction, the decree of accusation passed without a discussion.

The witnesses in support of the charges consisted principally of the chiefs of the municipality of Paris, who were the original accusers. But the defence which the prisoners made was so entirely destructive of the accusation, that though the judges and the jury had bound up their nature to this execrable deed; though the audience, like the tribunes of the Jacobins and the convention, were hired to applaud this crime, the eloquence of the accused drew iron tears down their cheeks, and convinced the whole tribunal of the infamy and falsehood of the charges. Imagine the remorse with which the minds of the jury must have been wrung when their employment compelled them to dress out matter for condemnation from the absurd and lying fables of the conspirators, who were called as witnesses to the indictment; while, to the demonstration even of the most perverse and ignorant, the prisoners refuted every charge with triumph on their accusers; and if any suspicion had existed with respect to their patriotism or love of the republic, the prosecution would have served to dispel it.

The judges, as well as the jury, although determined to execute their atrocious commission, saw that the defence of the prisoners would carry conviction to the minds of the audience, who, notwithstanding their being hired by the accusers, began to shew signs of compassion. The court, therefore, wrote to the convention to inform them, that if the trials were permitted to proceed, the forma-

ties of the law would reduce them to extreme difficulties ; and observed, that in a revolutionary process it was not necessary to be incumbered with troublesome witnesses, or a long defence. This humane epistle was supported by a deputation of the Jacobins, who spoke a still plainer language, by demanding a decree, that the accused should be condemned whenever the jury should feel themselves " sufficiently instructed," without attending to the whole of the charge, or hearing what the prisoners might have to allege in their defence. To this measure the society was urged by the municipal witnesses, who were stung with shame at seeing their perjuries unveiled.

The decree, empowering the jury to stop the prosecution at whatever period they thought proper, was virtually pronouncing the sentence of death : and the tribunal, releasing themselves from the torture they were compelled to suffer, while their consciences were every hour more and more loaded with the conviction of the innocence of the victims whose judicial murder they were bound to perpetrate, lost no time in declaring that they were sufficiently instructed.

Alas ! in what were " they sufficiently instructed ?" That the men they were going to condemn, were those who were the most distinguished for talents, and most devoted to the establishment of the republic, of which they were the founders. Were not this sanguinary jury sufficiently instructed, that it was for their virtues, and not their crimes, that these victims had been dragged before them ? and yet, with all this conviction on their minds, they coolly commanded the murder.

This atrocious condemnation was remonstrated against by the prisoners in vain. In vain they al-

leged, that against some of them no evidence whatever had been heard; that their names had scarcely been mentioned at the tribunal; and that, whatever pretence the jury might have for calling themselves sufficiently instructed respecting the rest, they could not be informed of the crimes of those against whom no witnesses had appeared. The court, sheltering themselves under the sanction of a decree, were little inclined to give the reasons of their conviction; and therefore replied to the arguments of the prisoners, by ordering the military force to take them from the tribunal. Valazé, in a transport of indignation, stabbed himself before the court. Brissot, Vergniaud, Gensonné, La Source, Fonfrede, Sillery, Ducos, Carra, Duperret, Gardien, Duprat, Fauchet, Beauvais, Duchastel, Mainvielle, La Caze, Le Hardy, Boileau, Anteboul, and Vigée, were led to execution on the following day. Vergniaud, having a pre-sage of his impending fate, had early provided himself with poison; but finding that his young friends Fonfrede and Ducos, who he had some hope would be spared, were companions of his misfortune, he gave the phial to the officer of the guard, resolving to wait the appointed moment, and to perish with them.

They met their fate with all the calm of innocence, and breathed their last vows for the safety and liberty of the republic. Those who were the melancholy witnesses of their last hours in prison, love to relate how they spoke, and felt, and acted. I have been told by one who was their fellow prisoner and friend, that their minds were in such a state of elevation, that no one could approach them with the common-place and ordinary topics of consolation. Brissot was serious and thoughtful, and at times an air of discontent clouded his brow; but

it was evident that he mourned over the fate of his country and not his own. Genfonné, firm and self-collected, seemed fearful of sullyng his lips by mentioning the names of his murderers. He did not utter a word respecting his own situation, but made many observations on the state of the republic, and expressed his ardent wishes for its happiness. Vergniaud was sometimes serious, and sometimes gay. He amused his fellow-prisoners at times with the recital of poetry which he retained in his memory, and sometimes indulged them with the last touches of that sublime eloquence which was now for ever lost to the world. Fonfrede and Ducos relieved the sombre of the piece by the habitual liveliness of their characters, although each lamented the fate of his brother to their respective friends, and sometimes shed tears over the distress and ruin of their wives and children; for both had young families and immense fortunes. Their courage was the more exemplary, as their fate was altogether unexpected.

Previously to the imprisonment of the deputies, while they were yet under arrest in their own houses, I frequently visited those who were in the number of our friends. Vergniaud had long told me that he saw no just foundation for hope, and that he would rather die, than live a witness of his country's shame. Fonfrede and Ducos had the full enjoyment of their liberty till the act of accusation appeared, in which they had not the least suspicion that they should be included. The day previous to the reading of this murderous proscription in the convention, Fonfrede had accompanied us to Montmorenci, about four leagues from Paris, where we had wandered till evening, amidst that enchanting scenery which Rousseau once inhabited, and which he had so luxuriantly described.

Alas! while the charms of nature had soothed our imaginations, and made us forget awhile the scenes of moral deformity exhibited in the polluted city we had left; while every thing around us breathed delight, and the landscape was a hymn to the Almighty; the assassins were at their bloody work, and plotting the murder of our friends. The next day Fonsfrede was sent to the Conciergerie, and we saw him no more. A week after we were ourselves arrested. He conveyed to us, from his dungeon, his sympathy in our misfortunes, and, after his condemnation, wrote to bid us a last farewell; but the letter was carried to the committee of general safety, and never reached us.

They were condemned at midnight. When they returned to their prison, they gave the appointed signal of their fate to their fellow-prisoners, whose seclusion afforded them no other means of knowing it, by singing a parody of the chorus of the *Marsellois* hymn—

Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'étandard sanglant est levé.

After spending the few hours of life that remained, in conversation, now and then enlivened by the sallies of the young and gay amongst them, they bade adieu to their fellow-prisoners, whose minds were so raised by the heroism which these patriots displayed, that it was some time before they became sensible of their loss.

The dungeon which they inhabited was shewn with profound veneration to every prisoner who afterwards arrived at this preparatory scene of murder. A superstitious respect was paid to the miserable matras of Vergniaud; and those who felt neither the force of their patriotism, nor shared in

their love for their country, were taught to pronounce with religious awe the names of these martyrs of liberty.

Had these lamented patriots known all the foulness of the crimes which the conspirators were meditating against them, it would have been easy to have withdrawn themselves from their vengeance, as many of their proscribed colleagues did. Some, indeed, fell under the murderer's hands, but some have happily escaped—Lanjuinais, Isnard, Louvet, and some others, appear again on the scene. Barbaroux and Buzot, I am told, are alive; and Pethion, who but a few months before was hailed as the support of his country, may again deserve the appellation—but the rest are gone for ever; and there is no one who has any taste for literature, or feeling for liberty, but will sigh at the remembrance of Rabaut, Guadet, and Condorcet.

LETTER VII.

Paris.

MY DEAR SIR,

SINCE my last letter was written, I have left Switzerland, and returned to Paris, and have had the unspeakable joy of embracing my family again. I have not yet mentioned to you (for till the Jacobins were destroyed it was too soon to relate) that I forsook home to return no more while Robespierre existed; and Robespierre was then in possession of

such established dominion, the spirit of liberty had so bowed itself beneath the axe of the guillotine, from the pastoral hills of Normandy to the orange-groves of Nice, from the ensanguined banks of the Loire to the mourning waters of Vaucluse, that when my mother, while she gave me her last embrace at parting, told me she should see me no more, my desponding heart assented to the sad prediction. Upon the fall of the deputies who were proscribed the 31st of May, and who were well known to have honoured us with their friendship, we became a subject of discussion at the committee of public safety, and a mandat d'arrêt would certainly have been issued against us if we had not already been imprisoned in consequence of the law against the English. By sharing the general misfortune of our countrymen in France, we were sheltered from any particular mark of vengeance. We afterwards obtained our liberty by means of the municipality, to whom we were unknown; and when the murderers had satiated their vengeance in the blood of our friends, my family had no longer any peculiar danger to fear. But my situation was far different. During the spring preceding the fatal 31st of May, when the deputies of the Gironde, and Barrere, passed most of their evenings at our house, I had not concealed that I was employed in writing some letters which have since been published in England, in which I had drawn the portrait of the tyrant in those dark shades of colouring that belonged to his hideous nature; and Barrere, in whose power my life was placed, was now the lacquey of Robespierre, and the great inquisitor of the English at Paris. He had now seared his conscience with crimes, and bathed his hands in the blood of the innocent. What still increased my danger was, that Barrere

could not but recollect, with the consciousness of his present vileness in our eyes, the political sentiments which he had expressed in those hours of social confidence, when had he been told that he should become the accomplice of unrecorded horrors, he would have answered with the feelings of Hazael, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" He could not but recollect that on the third of June, the day after the insurrection, he came to our house with looks disordered and haggard, with eyes filled with tears, and a mind that seemed bursting with indignant sorrow; repeatedly declaring that, since the national representation was violated, liberty was lost; deploring the fate of the Gironde, above all of Vergniaud, and execrating the Jacobins, and the commune of Paris. A thousand times he wished that he could transport himself to the foot of his native mountains, the Pyrenées, bid adieu for ever to the polluted city of Paris, and wander for the rest of his life amidst that sublime scenery which he described with melancholy enthusiasm.

It was not a little dangerous to have heard such sentiments from the lips of one who afterwards said boastfully in the convention, "Il n'y a que les morts qui ne reviennent pas;"—of one who became the leader of assassinations; and who, mounting the tribune with the light step of gaiety, dressed up with point and epigram those atrocious edicts of the committee to which his bleeding country answered with her groans. Barrere also knew that there was no danger of my declaring these things at the revolutionary tribunal, since those who were tried were not permitted to speak: and he had no longer any ties of acquaintance with us which might have restrained him from such conduct; since very soon after the 31st of May, upon

our refusing to receive some deputies of the mountain whom he asked leave to introduce to us, he abandoned us altogether.

In the mean time the English newspapers came regularly to the committee of public safety, in which passages from my letters were frequently transcribed, and the work mentioned as mine; and those papers were constantly translated into French for the members of the committee. Two copies of the work had also reached Paris; and although one was at my request destroyed, the other might, by means of those domiciliary visits which were so often repeated, have been thrown into the hands of revolutionary commissaries.

Thus I passed the winter at Paris, with the knife of the guillotine suspended over me by a frail thread, when a singular opportunity of escape presented itself, and I fled to Switzerland, with a heart almost broken by the crimes I had witnessed, and the calamities I had shared. I forsook those who were most dear to me on earth, with no other consolation than that I left them exposed only to the common danger of every individual in the country, and relieved from the cruel apprehensions they had felt on my account.

I proceeded on my journey haunted by the images of gens d'armes, who I fancied were pursuing me, and with a sort of superstitious persuasion that it was impossible I should escape. I felt as if some magical spell would chain my feet at the frontier of France, which seemed to me a boundary that was impassable. As I approached the frontier the agitation of my spirits increased, and when I reached Bourg-Libre, the last French post where commissaries were appointed to examine the passports and those who presented them, my heart sunk within me, and I tried to resign myself to a fate which

seemed to my disordered mind inevitable. But I found that I had disquieted myself in vain : revolutionary government had relaxed its iron nerve at this distance from the seat of tyranny ; and the commissaries on the frontiers, after having performed their office with the mildest urbanity, suffered us to proceed to Basil, which is only half a league farther.

Some tall stakes driven into the earth at certain distances mark the limits of France and Switzerland. We drove rapidly past them, and were then beyond the reach of revolutionary government, and the axe of the guillotine.

At Basil, now almost the only social speck on Europe's wide surface, where men meet for any other purposes than those of mutual destruction, I was in safety : but I was an exile from my family—from the only friends I had left—my friends in England, to whom I had written immediately on my arrival, in the fulness of my heart, and with the fond persuasion that they had trembled for my safety and would rejoice in my deliverance, having (with few exceptions indeed!) returned no answers to my letters. With what overwhelming sensations did I receive the tidings of the fall of Robespierre, which was to change the colour of my life, and give peace and consolation to so many millions of my fellow-creatures ! After waiting till the struggle maintained by the Jacobins against the national representation had happily ended, I returned to Paris. On entering again that polluted city, a thousand fatal recollections rushed upon my mind, a thousand local sensations overwhelmed my spirit. In driving along the Rue Honoré, the appalling procession of the guillotine arose before my troubled imagination—I saw in the vehicles of death the spectres of my murdered friends. The

magnificent square of the revolution, with all its gay buildings, appeared to me clotted with blood, and incumbered with the dead. Along the silent and deserted streets of the fauxbourg Germain, I saw inscribed in broad letters upon the gate of every hotel, "propriété nationale," while the orphans whose fathers and mothers have perished on the scaffold, and who lived upon the alms of charity, pass in silence by the dwellings which are their rightful inheritance.—The red flag waving above the portals of their forfeited mansions, reminded me of an image of horror in De Foe's history of the plague at London, where, he says, every house that was infected was marked with a bloody sign of the cross.

Yet at least we are no longer condemned to despair of finding justice on earth. Every day is signalized by such acts of retribution, that it seems as if heaven visibly descended to punish the guilty, while at the same time mercy and humanity are binding up the wounds of the afflicted, and setting the captive free. We seem to live in regions of romance. Louvet, Isnard, and others of our proscribed friends so long entombed in subterraneous dungeons, wandering over desert mountains, or concealed in the gloom of caverns unvisited by day, now restored to society and to their country, recount to us the secrets of their prison-house, their "hair-breadth 'scapes" to which we listen with eager anxiety, and tremble at their past dangers.—But I must not thus anticipate. Let me lead you to the convent in the fauxbourg St. Antoine, to which we were transferred in order to make room at the Luxembourg for prisoners whom it was thought expedient to guard more strictly. We were taught by the administrators of the police to consider our removal as a mark of particular indulgence towards us, since we should have the privi-

lege of seeing our friends through the grate, and of walking occasionally in the garden of the convent. Our countrymen were condemned to remain in the Luxembourg, at which they repined and remonstrated in vain. Wives were separated from their husbands, daughters from their fathers; and as far the greater part of the English were in confined circumstances, and lived by their respective occupations, their resources being stopped by their imprisonment, the little store of assignats which they had saved from sequestration they were now forced to divide, and, instead of sharing their frugal meal together, their expences were doubled. Many were reduced to the most cruel difficulties, who had been accustomed to maintain their families respectably by their industry, and felt that the humiliation of receiving alms was no slight aggravation of the miseries of captivity*. That part of the convent which the municipality had allotted for our prison consisting only of bare walls, we were each of us permitted to return to our respective houses, in order to provide ourselves with beds, and what furniture and clothes we thought proper. We were attended thither by an inspector of the police and guards, together with one of the commissaries of our own section, who had put the seals on our apartments, and who on removing them

* I cannot resist mentioning that Mons. and Madame Du F——, with whose misfortunes and whose virtues you are acquainted, no sooner heard that our property was confiscated in France, and that in consequence of an act of parliament our resources were stopped from England, than they wrote to tell us that their fortune was at our disposal. Those generous friends, together with a few others, endeavoured to atone for the injustice of their countrymen by the steadfast fidelity of their attachment. Such moments of trial and of danger are indeed fitted to be the test of friendship, and call forth the real character: in those respects, the experience of a year of revolutionary government is equivalent to that of fifty years of ordinary life.

examined our papers, consisting now only of a few poetical scraps which had escaped the flames. Odes, elegies, and sonnets were instantly bundled up and sent to the municipality, notwithstanding my assurances that the muses to whom they were addressed, far from being accomplices in any conspiracy against liberty, had in all ages been its warmest auxiliaries. With what melancholy sensations did we re-visit that home from which we were again to be torn in a few hours ! How often did my eyes wander over every object in our apartment ! The chairs and tables, which we found in the same position as we had left them on our first imprisonment, seemed like mute friends whom it was anguish to leave, and whose well-known attitudes recalled the comforts of the past. With aching hearts we were once more led through the streets of Paris to our new prison. This convent, called Les Anglaïses, was still inhabited by twenty-three English nuns, and, as it was their own property, had not shared the general fate of the monastic edifices. While the French monks and nuns had for more than a year before this period been driven from their retreats, the religious houses both of men and women, which belonged to the English, had been respected, and their inhabitants left undisturbed. The English or rather Irish monks had, however, long since thrown off their habits, and conformed as well as they were able to the new system of opinions. But this was not the case with those religious sisters, whose enthusiastic attachment to the external signs of their profession was greater, and their worldly wisdom less. The inhabitants of the fauxbourg St. Antoine, where they resided, accustomed from infancy to revere them, to have the wants of the poor supplied at the gate of the convent, and, while under the former government they

were treated with neglect or disdain by others, to be there received with evangelical humility, felt that their esteem and veneration for the nuns had survived their own superstitious belief. The conquerors of the Bastile, the terror of aristocracy, and the vanguard of revolutions, laying aside their bloody pikes and bayonets, humbled themselves before these holy sisters, whom a sort of visible sanctity seemed to encompass, and whom they suffered, notwithstanding the general regulation, to wear the cherished symbols of their order, the veil and the cross, and seven times a day to ring the bell for prayers. When we had passed the sentinels who guarded the convent, the gate was unlocked for our admission by a nun in her habit. She embraced us with affectionate warmth, and, addressing us in English, begged we would be comforted, since she and the other nuns who were to have the charge of us were our countrywomen and our sisters. This soothing sympathy, expressed in our native language, formed such a contrast to the rude accents of inspectors of police, that it seemed as if some pitying angel had leaned from heaven to comfort us. The kindness with which we were received by our amiable country-women, contributed to reconcile us to our chamber, which might more properly be called a passage to other rooms, where the glowing tapestry of the Luxembourg was exchanged for plaistered walls, and where we had to suffer physical as well as moral evils, the weather being intensely cold, and our wretched gallery having neither stove nor chimney. One circumstance tended to make our situation tolerable, which was that true spirit of fraternity that prevailed in our community, consisting of about forty female prisoners besides the nuns. Into how happy a region would the world be transformed, if that

mutual forbearance and amity were to be found in it which had power to cheer even the gloom of a prison !

In addition to the tie of common calamity was the tie of a common country ; and in our present situation this bond of union appeared so strong, that it seemed, as Dr. Johnson said of family relations, that we were born each others friends. It was the general study of the whole community to prevent each others wishes. There were no rich amongst us. The rich had made themselves wings, and vanished away before the promulgation of the law against the English ; but those who had still any resources left, shared all their little luxuries and indulgencies with those that had none. The young succoured the old, the active served the infirm, and the gay cheered the dejected. There were indeed among us a few persons, who born of French parents, having passed their whole lives in France, and not speaking one word of our native language, seemed astonished to find by their imprisonment that they were English women. They had no trace or recollection of that country which in evil hour chanced to give them birth, and did not easily reconcile themselves to the grated convent, while their French sisters were enjoying perfect liberty.

When such of the former nobility who were our fellow-prisoners at the Luxembourg heard that we were going to be transferred to the fauxbourg St. Antoine, they gathered round us to express their fears for our safety in that frightful quarter of the city. I was persuaded, on the contrary, that we had much more to fear while shut up in this state prison with themselves, than in the fauxbourg St. Antoine, the inhabitants of which were chiefly composed of workmen and mechanics, who in the course of the revolution had acted too much in

union to be led to perpetrate any partial mischief; since those immense numbers which had power to overthrow government could not be bribed to commit massacres.

The administrators of the police, when they ordered preparations to be made for our reception, announced us to the section as being all the wives and daughters of milords anglois. This was no auspicious introduction: accordingly our first care was to lay aside the honours and dignities conferred upon us by the officers of the police, and which certainly would not have been confirmed by the herald's office. The only distinction we now envied was that of belonging to the privileged class who gained their bread by the labour of their hands, and who alone were exempted from the penalties of the law. We would thankfully have consented to purchase at the price of toil the sweets of liberty, when bereaved of which the sickening soul grows weary of existence. In vain we tried to twine the flowers of social pleasure around the bars of our prison; in vain we "took the viol and the harp, or endeavoured to rejoice at the sound of the organ." That good which alone gives value to every other, was wanting; and music was discordant, and conversation joyless.

Having repelled the calumnious report of our nobility, the revolutionary committee of our section, under whose inspection we were placed, and who visited us in succession every day, began to look upon us with a more propitious eye; and lest our health should be impaired by confinement, they unlocked the garden gate, of the key of which since our arrival they had taken possession, to prevent any attempts to scale the walls, and permitted us to walk two hours every day accompanied by themselves. During these walks we found means to convince them that we had been

guilty of no other offence against the state, than that of being born in England; and the common principles of justice taught these unlettered patriots to lament the severity of our fate, which they endeavoured to soften by every mark of honest kindness.

The visits of the administration of police were far less agreeable than those of our good commissaries. The first time they came, Brutus, one of their secretaries, fired with uncontrollable rage at the sight of the nun who unlocked the gate for his admission, rudely seized her veil, which he was with difficulty prevented from tearing off her face. This ferocious pagan threw down the cross which was erected in the garden, and trampled it under foot; and having poured forth a volley of imprecations against the great bell, which still hung at the steeple instead of being transformed into a cannon, he left the dismayed nuns trembling with horror, and hastened to denounce the veils, the crosses, and the great bell at the municipality. The next morning Pache, the mayor of Paris, sent orders for the bell to be taken down, the crosses to be removed, and the nuns to throw off their habits immediately. Nothing could exceed their despair upon receiving this municipal mandate. The convent resounded with lamentations, and the veils which were now to be cast off were bathed with tears.

There was, however, little time to be allowed to the indulgence of unavailing sorrow. Brutus might return, and it was necessary to proceed to action. Accordingly, a council of caps was called in the room of the superior; and after a deliberation, sometimes interrupted by sighs and sometimes by pleasantry, we all went to work, and in a few hours sweeping trains were converted into gowns, and flowing veils into bonnets. One charming

young nun, who was a pensive enthusiast, begged that, if it were possible, her bonnet might shroud her face altogether; while another, whose regards were not entirely turned away from this world, hinted that she should have no objection to the decoration of a bow.

My chief consolation during my confinement arose from the society of sister Theresa, that amiable nun who so much wished to hide a face which nature had formed to excite love and admiration. It was impossible to converse with her without feeling that the revolution was a blessing, if it was only for having prohibited vows which robbed society of those who were formed to be its delight and ornament. I never met with a human creature who seemed to approach nearer to the ideas we form of angelic purity, who possessed a more corrected spirit, or a more tender heart. Devotion was her first delight, her unfailing source of happiness; and sometimes, instead of regretting her fate, I envied her feelings, and was tempted to exclaim with Pope,

How happy is the blameless vestal's lot,
The world forgetting, by the world forgot!
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,
Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign'd;
Labour and rest, that equal periods keep;
Obedient slumbers, that can wake and weep;
Desires compos'd, affections ever even,
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven.

We were allowed the melancholy indulgence of seeing our friends through an iron grate; and there were still among the French some persons whose courageous friendship, undismayed by all the frowns of power, and the increasing terrors of revolutionary measures, did not abandon us in our prison. The

greater part of the English who were yet in France, having been established in that country for years, had acquired some friends who lamented their misfortunes, and who risked their own personal safety by making unwearied efforts for their deliverance. The dress of our visitors was indeed not a little grotesque, the period being now arrived when the visible signs of patriotism were dirty linen, pantaloons, uncombed hair, red caps, or black wigs, and all, as Rosalind says, "denoting a careless disorder." The obsolete term of *muscadin*, which means a scented fop, was revived; and every man who had the boldness to appear in a clean shirt was branded with that appellation, and every woman who wore a hat was a *muscadine*; for the period was still remembered when a round cap was the badge of rotture, nor were the aristocratical pretensions of the hat yet buried in oblivion. It is remarkable enough, that at this period Robespierre always appeared not only dressed with neatness, but with some degree of elegance, and, while he called himself the leader of the sans-culottes, never adopted the costume of his band. His hideous countenance, far from being involved in a black wig, was decorated with hair carefully arranged, and nicely powdered; while he endeavoured to hide those emotions of his inhuman soul which his eyes might sometimes have betrayed, beneath a large pair of green spectacles, though he had no defect in his sight.

At this period one of the most accomplished women that France has produced perished on the scaffold. This lady was Madame Roland, the wife of the late minister. On the 31st of May he had fled from his prosecutors, and his wife who remained was carried to prison. The wits observed on this occasion, that the body of Roland was missing, but that he had left his soul behind. Madame Roland

was indeed possessed of the most distinguished talents, and a mind highly cultivated by the study of literature. I had been acquainted with her since I first came to France, and had always observed in her conversation the most ardent attachment to liberty, and the most enlarged sentiments of philanthropy; sentiments which she developed with an eloquence peculiar to herself, with a flow and power of expression which gave new graces and new energy to the French language. With these extraordinary endowments of mind she united all the warmth of a feeling heart, and all the charms of the most elegant manners. She was tall and well shaped, her air was dignified, and although more than thirty-five years of age she was still handsome. Her countenance had an expression of uncommon sweetness, and her full dark eyes beamed with the brightest rays of intelligence. I visited her in the prison of St. Pelagie, where her soul, superior to circumstances, retained its accustomed serenity, and she conversed with the same animated cheerfulness in her little cell as she used to do in the hotel of the minister. She had provided herself with a few books, and I found her reading Plutarch. She told me she expected to die; and the look of placid resignation with which she spoke of it, convinced me that she was prepared to meet death with a firmness worthy of her exalted character. When I enquired after her daughter, an only child of thirteen years of age, she burst into tears; and at the overwhelming recollection of her husband and her child, the courage of the victim of liberty was lost in the feelings of the wife and the mother.

Immediately after the murder of the Gironde she was sent to the Conciergerie, like them to undergo the mockery of a trial, and like them to perish.

When brought before the revolutionary tribunal she preserved the most heroic firmness, though she was treated with such barbarity, and insulted by questions so injurious to her honour, that sometimes the tears of indignation started from her eyes. This celebrated woman, who at the bar of the national convention had by the commanding graces of her eloquence forced even from her enemies the tribute of applause and admiration, was now in the hands of vulgar wretches; by whom her fine talents, far from being appreciated, were not even understood. I shall transcribe a copy of her defence taken from her own manuscript*. With keen regret I must add, that some papers in her justification, which she sent me from her prison, perhaps with a view that at some happier period, when the voice of innocence might be heard, I should make them public, I was compelled to destroy, the night on which I was myself arrested; since, had they been found in my possession, they would inevitably have involved me in her fate. Before I took this resolution, which cost me a cruel effort, I employed every means in my power to preserve those precious memorials, in vain; for I could find no person who would venture to keep them amidst the terrors of domiciliary visits, and the certainty, if they were found, of being put to death as an accomplice of the writer. But her fair fame stands in no need of such testimonials: her memory is embalmed in the minds of the wise and good, as one of those glorious martyrs who have sealed with their blood the liberties of their country. After hearing her sentence, she said, "Vous me jugez digne de partager le sort des grands hommes que vous avez assassinés. Je tâ-

* See Appendix, No. III.

cherai de porter à l'échafaud le courage qu'ils y ont montré*."

On the day of her trial she dressed herself in white: her long dark hair flowed loosely to her waist, and her figure would have softened any hearts less ferocious than those of her judges. On her way to the scaffold she was not only composed, but sometimes assumed an air of gaiety, in order to encourage a person who was condemned to die at the same time, but who was not armed with the same fortitude.

When more than one person is led at the same time to execution, since they can suffer only in succession, those who are reserved to the last are condemned to feel multiplied deaths at the sound of the falling instrument, and the sight of the bloody scaffold. To be the first victim was therefore considered as a privilege, and had been allowed to Madame Roland as a woman. But when she observed the dismay of her companion, she said to him, "*Allez le premier: que je vous épargne au moins la douleur de voir couler mon sang†.*" She then turned to the executioner, and begged that this sad indulgence might be granted to her fellow sufferer. The executioner told her that he had received orders that she should perish first. "But you cannot, I am sure," said she with a smile, "refuse the last request of a lady." The executioner complied with her demand. When she mounted the scaffold, and was tied to the fatal plank, she lifted up her eyes to the statue of Liberty, near which the guillotine was

* "You think me worthy, then, of sharing the fate of those great men whom you have assassinated. I will endeavour to go to the scaffold with the courage which they displayed."

† "Go first: let me at least spare you the pain of seeing my blood shed."

placed, and exclaimed, " Ah Liberté, comme on t'a Jouée *!" The next moment she perished. But her name will be recorded in the annals of history, as one of those illustrious women whose superior attainments seem fitted to exalt her sex in the scale of being.

She had predicted that her husband would not survive her loss, and her prediction was fulfilled. Roland, who had concealed himself till this period, no sooner heard the fate of his wife, whose influence over his mind had often been a subject of reproach amongst his enemies, than, feeling that life was no longer worth possessing, he put an end to his existence. His body was found in a wood near the high-road between Paris and Rouen: the papers which were in his pocket-book were sent to the committee of general safety, and have never seen the light. His unhappy daughter found an asylum with an old friend of her proscribed parents, who had the courage to receive her at a period when it was imminently dangerous to afford her protection. But the time probably now draws near when this child will be adopted by her country, and an honourable provision will be made for her, as a testimony of national gratitude towards those who gave her birth.

Amidst the extraordinary changes which were passing in France, the convention now changed time itself, and decreed the new calendar. A report was made on it, so philosophical and so pleasing to the imagination, that, amidst the sanguinary measures of those days, it seemed to the oppressed heart what a solitary spot of fresh verdure appears to the eye amidst the cragginess of louring rocks, or the gloom of savage deserts. Love of change is na-

* " Ah Liberty ! how hast thou been sported with !"

tural to sorrow; and for my own part I felt myself so little obliged to the months of my former acquaintance, which as they passed over my head had generally brought successive evils in their train, or served as the anniversaries of some melancholy epocha, that I was not much displeased to part with them for months with appellations that bring to the mind images of nature, which in every aspect has some power of giving pleasure, from Nivose the month of snows, to Floreal the month of flowers. I therefore soon learnt to count the days of my captivity by the new calendar, which was highly necessary, since, if a reclamation for liberty had been dated on Monday instead of *Primidi*, or on Tuesday to the neglect of *Duodi*, the police would not only have passed to the order of the day, but declared the writer *suspect*. After two months imprisonment we obtained our liberty, in consequence of the unwearied efforts which were made for that purpose by a young Frenchman whom my sister has since married. He was at Rouen in Normandy when the decree against the English arrived, and a few hours after saw a long procession of coaches pass through the streets filled with English prisoners, who, just torn from their families and their homes, were weeping bitterly. Deeply affected by this spectacle, he flew to Paris with the resolution of obtaining our liberty, or of sharing our prison. He haunted the municipality every night, attended the levées of administrators of police every morning, risked his own personal safety a thousand times, and at length, like a true knight, vanquished all obstacles, and snatched his mistress from captivity. I could not help lamenting, that he was compelled to make application for our release to Chaumette, the procureur of the commune, who had been the

principal evidence against the deputies of the Gironde. Nothing could be more cruel than this kind of humiliation—

Prostrate our friends' dire murderer to implore,
And kiss those hands yet reeking with their gore.

With what delicious emotions did we return to our own habitation ! After passing two months in prison at such a period, we felt the blessedness of home in its full extent. To range through our own apartments without being pursued by guards or jailors, to return to domestic comforts and domestic peace, excited sensations the most delightful. Society had indeed vanished, and home was but a milder prison, where we lived in voluntary seclusion, trembling at every knock at the gate, lest it should bring the mandate of a new arrestation ; and afraid to venture out, lest we should be found guilty of an English physiognomy, by some of the numerous spies of the police, who were continually prowling through the streets of Paris. These indeed were the only persons we had to fear ; for even at the very moment when the permanent order of the day at the Jacobins was the crimes of the English, far from receiving the smallest insult from the people of Paris, they displayed the utmost sympathy for our situation, and our release from prison seemed to diffuse general satisfaction through our whole neighbourhood.

The prisons became more and more crowded, and increasing numbers were every day dragged to the scaffold. *Suspect* was the warrant of imprisonment, and *conspiracy* was the watch-word of murder. One person was sent to prison, because aristocracy was written in his countenance ; another, because it was said to be hidden at his heart ; many

were deprived of liberty, because they were rich ; others, because they were learned ; and most who were arrested enquired the reason in vain.

LETTER VIII.

Paris.

A FEW weeks after our release from prison, Rabaut de St. Etienne was put to death. He was one of the most enlightened and virtuous men whom the revolution had called forth, and had acquired general esteem by his conduct as a legislator, and considerable reputation by his talents as a writer. He was the president of the famous committee of twelve, which was appointed by the convention, previously to the 31st of May, to examine into the conspiracies which threatened its existence, and which, as I have already related, hastened its partial dissolution. Rabaut, as often as he presented himself to make the report, was compelled by the interruptions of the conspirators and their agents to retire from the tribune, until that moment arrived, when he, together with the members of the commission, and the deputies of the Gironde, were expelled, or torn from the convention ! I saw him on this memorable day (for he took shelter for a few hours at our house) filled with despair, not so much for the loss of his own life, which he then considered as inevitable, as for that of the liberty of his country, now falling under the vilest

despotism. He escaped arrest on the 2d of June, from not having been present at the convention when the conspirators consummated their crime by means of the military force of Paris, and concealed himself in the house of a friend, with his brother, one of the seventy-three deputies who had signed the protest.

They enclosed part of a room for their place of shelter, and built up the wall with their own hands, placing a book-case before the entrance, so that there was not the least appearance of concealment. They employed a carpenter, in whom they had great confidence, to make the door, and the wretch betrayed them. Rabaut de St. Etienne was immediately brought before the revolutionary tribunal to have his person identified, for he was now outlawed, which in France is the sentence of death. He was led to execution; and his wife, a most amiable woman, unable to support the loss of a husband whom she tenderly loved, put an end to her existence. His brother was taken to the Conciergerie, where he languished with three other victims, for many months, in a subterraneous dungeon; and there being only one bed allotted for four persons, he lay upon the damp floor, and contracted such violent disorders, that his life was long despaired of. He has now taken his seat in the convention. The generous friend and his wife, who had given the brothers an asylum, were also dragged to prison; and some time after were condemned, for this noble act of friendship, to perish on the scaffold.

If France, during the unrelenting tyranny of Robespierre, exhibited unexampled crimes, it was also the scene of extraordinary virtue; of the most affecting instances of magnanimity and kindness. Of this nature was the conduct of a young man,

who being a prisoner with his brother, happened to be present when the names of the victims were called over, who were summoned to appear the next day before the sanguinary tribunal. The young man found the name of his brother, who at that moment was absent, upon the fatal list. He paused only an instant to reflect, that the life of the father of a large family was of more value than his own: he answered the call, surrendered himself to the officer, and was executed in his brother's stead. A father made the same sacrifice for his son; for the tribunal was so negligent of forms, that it was not difficult to deceive its vigilance.

The increasing horrors which every day produced, had at length the effect of extinguishing in every heart the love of life, that sentiment which clings so fast to our nature. To die, and to get beyond the reach of oppression, appeared a privilege; and perhaps nothing appalled the souls of the tyrants so much as that serenity with which their victims went to execution. The page of history has held up to the admiration of succeeding ages, those philosophers who have met death with fortitude. But had they been led among the victims of Robespierre to execution, they would have found themselves, in this respect, undistinguished from the crowd. They would have seen persons of each sex, of all ages, and all conditions, looking upon death with a contempt equal to their own. Socrates expiring surrounded by his friends, or Seneca and Lucan sinking gently into death, have perhaps less claim to admiration than those blooming beauties, who in all the first freshness of youth, in the very spring of life, submitted to the stroke of the executioner with placid smiles on their countenances, and looked like angels in their flight to heaven.

Among the victims of the tyrants, the women have been peculiarly distinguished for their admirable firmness in death. Perhaps this arose from the superior sensibility which belongs to the female mind, and which made it feel that it was less terrible to die, than to survive the objects of its tenderness. When the general who commanded at Longwy on its surrender to the Prussians was condemned to die, his wife, a beautiful young woman of four-and-twenty years of age, who heard the sentence pronounced, cried out in a tone of despair, "Vive le roi!" The inhuman tribunal, instead of attributing her conduct to distraction, condemned her to die. Her husband, when he was placed in the cart, was filled with astonishment and anguish when he saw his beloved wife led towards it. The people, shocked at the spectacle, followed her to the scaffold, crying, "Elle n'a pas mérité la mort." "Mes amis," said she, "c'est ma faute ; j'ai voulu périr avec mon mari*."

The fury of these implacable monsters seemed directed with peculiar virulence against that sex, whose weakness man was destined by nature to support. The scaffold was every day bathed with the blood of women. Some who had been condemned to die, but had been respited on account of their pregnancy, were dragged to death immediately after their delivery, in that state of weakness which savages would have respected. One unfortunate woman, the wife of a peasant, had been brought to Paris, with nineteen other women of the same class, and condemned to die with her companions. She heard her sentence without emotion ; but when they came to carry her to execution, and take

* "She did not deserve death."—"My friends, it is my own fault ; I was resolved to perish with my husband."

away the infant who was hanging at her breast, and receiving that nourishment of which death was so soon to dry up the source, she rent the air with her cries, with the strong shriek of instinctive affection, the piercing throes of maternal tenderness — But in vain! the infant was torn from the bosom that cherished it, and the agonies of the unfortunate mother found respite in death.

Fourteen young girls of Verdun, who had danced at a ball given by the Prussians, were led to the scaffold together, and looked like nymphs adorned for a festival. Sometimes whole generations were swept away at one moment; and the tribunal exhibited many a family-piece, which has almost broken the heart of humanity. Malesherbes, the counsel of Louis XVI. was condemned to die, at eighty years of age, with his daughter, and son-in-law, his grand-daughter and grand-son.

His daughter seemed to have lost sight of every earthly object but her venerable parent: she embraced him a thousand times on the way to execution; bathed his face with her tears; and when the minister of death dragged her from him, forgetting that the next moment put an end to her own, she exclaimed, “Wretch, are you going to murder my father?”

These proscribed families seemed to find the sweetest source of consolation in dying together, and to consider the momentary passage which they were going to make, as so much the less painful, since they should undergo no separation, but enter at the same instant into another state of existence. A young lady, the former marchioness of Bois-Berenger, was imprisoned in the Luxembourg with her whole family. When her father, mother, and younger sister received their act of accusation, and she found herself alone exempted, she shed a flood

of tears, her heart was overwhelmed with anguish. "You will die without me," she cried; "I am condemned to survive you; we shall not perish together!" While she abandoned herself to despair, her act of accusation arrived: a ray of transport was instantly diffused over her countenance, she flew into the arms of her parents, and embraced them. "My dear mother," she exclaimed, "we shall die together!" When the family was transferred to the Conciergerie, she never left her mother a moment, but watched over her with unwearied tenderness; and while she tried to sooth her sufferings by her filial endearments, she endeavoured to inspire her with courage by the example of her own heroic fortitude. It was the picture of a sort of Roman charity. The unfortunate mother was mute, and her whole soul seemed petrified with horror. She seemed another Niobe. Her admirable daughter died with the most noble resolution.

Mademoiselle Malefi, her younger sister, when condemned to die, said to her father with naïveté, "Je me ferrerai tant contre vous, mon bon pere, vous qui êtes si honnête homme, que Dieu me laissera passer malgré mes péchés*."

In the prison of the Force, the men were allowed to breathe the air in a court-yard separated by a wall from the habitation of the women. A common-sewer was the only means of communication. At that spot, an unhappy son presented himself every morning and every night, to enquire after his mother, who was condemned to die, but reprieved because she was pregnant, and after her delivery executed. That pious child, in his early age al-

* "I will cling so fast to you, my dear father, you, who are so good, that God will suffer me to pass in spite of my transgressions."

ready the victim of misfortune, knelt down before the infectious sewer, and, with his mouth placed upon the hole, poured forth the feelings of his filial tenderness. His younger brother, a lovely child of three years of age, and who was suffered to remain with his mother till her last moments, was often placed at the opposite end of the sewer, and answered for his mother when she was too ill to undertake that task herself. A person of my acquaintance heard him say, "Mama a moins pleuré cette nuit—un peu reposée, et te souhaite le bon jour; c'est Lolo, qui t'aime bien, qui te dit cela*." At length this unfortunate mother, when going to execution, transmitted to her son, by the sewer, her long and graceful tresses, as the only inheritance she had to give. She then bade her infant a last farewell, and was led to the scaffold, where her husband had perished some months before.

One of the persons most distinguished by their noble contempt of death was Girey Dupré, with whom I was well acquainted. He was the writer of a paper called the *Patriote François*, in conjunction with Brissot: he had acquired a high degree of literary reputation, and maintained his mother, a widow, by the labours of his pen. He was twenty-four years of age, and his countenance was one of the most agreeable I ever saw. To these personal advantages he united the most frank and pleasing manners, and distinguished powers of conversation. He had defended the deputies of the Gironde with too much energy not to be involved in their fate, and he was also connected by the ties of friendship with Brissot. Dupré was forced to fly from his persecutors, and seek refuge

* "Mamma has not cried so much to-night—She has slept a little, and wishes you a good morning: it is Lolo who speaks to you, who loves you very much."

at Bordeaux, where he was seized and brought back in irons to Paris. Far from being depressed by his approaching fate, the natural gaiety of his disposition never forsook him a single moment. When interrogated at the tribunal with respect to his connection with Brissot, he answered only in these words*, "J'ai connu Brissot; j'atteste qu'il a vécu comme Aristide, et qu'il est mort comme Sydney martyr de la liberté." He presented himself at the tribunal with his hair cut off, the collar of his shirt thrown open, and already prepared for the stroke of the executioner. On his way to the scaffold he saw Robespierre's mistress at the window of his lodging, with her sister, and some of their ferocious accomplices. "A bas les tyrans et les dictateurs †!" cried Dupré, repeating this prophetic exclamation till he lost sight of the house. While going to execution, he sung in a triumphant tone a very popular patriotic song which he had himself composed, and of which the chorus was "Plutôt la mort que l'esclavage ‡." That cherished sentiment he fondly repeated even to his last moment, and death left the half-finished sentence on his lips:

Claviere, who had been contemporary minister with Roland, and who was imprisoned in the Conciergerie, upon receiving his act of accusation, saw that the list of witnesses against him was composed of his most implacable enemies. "These are assassins," said he to a fellow-prisoner; "I will snatch myself from their rage." He then repeated these lines of Voltaire,

"Les criminels tremblans sont trainés au supplice;
"Les mortels généreux disposent de leur sort:"

* "I knew Brissot; I attest that he lived like Aristides, and died like Sydney the martyr of liberty."

† "Down with tyrants and dictators!"

‡ "Rather death than slavery!"

and after deliberating with his companion upon the most effectual manner of striking himself so that the dagger might reach his heart, he retired to his cell, where he was found a few minutes after breathing his last sigh. Madam Claviere, upon receiving the tidings of his death, swallowed poison, after having embraced her children, and regulated her affairs. Notwithstanding his suicide, the property of Claviere was confiscated, as if he had been regularly condemned. A law had lately been passed to construe an act of suicide into a counter-revolutionary project, when the father of a family who knew that his life was devoted, had voluntarily put an end to his existence in the hope of preserving his children from want. Robespierre and his financial agents found nothing more pressing than to baffle those conspiracies against the revenues of their government; for confiscation was so evidently the leading motive for the great mass of their judicial assassinations, that the guillotine, amongst other numerous titles, was most generally called the "minister of finance." The tribunal now began, to use the language of the orator*, "to look into their cash account for delinquency, and found the offenders guilty of so many hundred thousand pounds worth of treason. They now accused by the multiplication table, tried by the rule of three, and condemned, not by the sublime institutes of Justinian, but by the unerring rules of Cocker's arithmetic."

On some occasions the genuine feelings of nature burst forth amidst the stupefied terror that had frozen every heart. A law had lately passed, obliging every merchant to inscribe on his door the stock of merchandize in his warehouse, under the penal-

* See Mr. Sheridan's eloquent speech on Mr. Hastings's trial.

ty of death. A wine-merchant, whose affairs had called him hastily into the country, entrusted the business of the inscription to his son, who from ignorance or negligence, for it was clearly proved that there existed no intention of fraud, had omitted to affix the declaration in the precise words of the law. The conscientious jury of the revolutionary tribunal condemned him to death, presuming on the counter-revolutionary intention in this case from the act, though they were in general accustomed, for want of other evidence, to find the act by guessing at the intention. The innocent prisoner had prepared himself for death, when the minister of justice, informed of the case, wrote to the convention, demanding a respite. His letter had not been half read before the hall resounded with the cry of "reprieve, reprieve!" and fearing that the act of pardon would arrive too late, the convention, dispensing with the usual formalities, not only sent its officers and part of the military force, but great numbers of the deputies rushed out to stop the execution. The officer who received the order first, with which he flew towards the place of the revolution, told me that on his coming out of the convention he saw the scaffold reared and the crowd assembled. He had scarcely reached the first tree of the vista when he saw the fatal knife descend; he redoubled his speed, but before he got to the end of the walk another head had fallen: a third person had mounted the scaffold, but the voice of the messenger was too weak, from the efforts he had made to reach the spot, to be noticed by the multitude. The fourth had ascended when he gained the place, rushed through the crowd, called to the executioner, and leaped on the scaffold. The prisoner had been stripped, his shoulders were bare, and he was already tied to the plank; when the

cry of "reprieve" burst forth. The officer enquired his name, which the young man told him. "Alas! you are not the person," he replied. The prisoner submitted calmly to his fate.

The bearer of the reprieve, who is a person of a very benevolent disposition, declared that he never felt so acute a pang as when he was compelled to turn away from this unfortunate victim. He hastened, however, to the prison, where he found the person who was reprieved awaiting the return of the cart and the executioner, his hair cut and his hands tied, to be led to death at another part of the city where his house stood. A wife and nine children were deploring the miserable loss of a husband and a father, when the officer who had brought the tidings of life to the prisoner, went at his request to carry them to his distracted family. I need not describe what he related to me of the scene—your heart will readily fill up the picture.

That class of men who were peculiarly the object of the tyrant's rage were men of letters, with respect to whom the jealousy of the rival mingled with the fury of the oppressor, and against whom his hatred was less implacable for having opposed his tyranny, than for having eclipsed his eloquence. It is a curious consideration, that the unexampled crimes of this sanguinary usurper, and the consequent miseries which have desolated the finest country of Europe, may perhaps, if traced to their source, be found to arise from the resentment of a disappointed wit. Robespierre, for the misfortune of humanity, was persecuted by the most restless desire of distinguishing himself as an orator, and nature had denied him the power. He and his brother were born at Arras, and left orphans at an early age. The bishop of Arras had bestowed on them the advantages of a liberal education. Ro-

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Robespierre distinguished himself by his application to his first studies, and obtained many literary prizes. At the age of sixteen, elated by the applause he had received, he fancied himself endowed with such rare power of genius as would enable him to act a splendid part on the theatre of the world, and his friends indulged the same fond expectation. He applied to the study of the law, and already in imagination contemplated himself disputing with the first orators of the age the palm of eloquence. Experience, however, convinced his friends, and at length himself, that they had indulged a vain illusion. He discovered no taste or aptitude for the profession for which he was designed, became weary of study, was checked by the slightest difficulties; and being found destitute of those talents which were necessary to his success as a public speaker, his benefactor, after a trial of sufficient length, refused to support him any longer at a considerable and fruitless expence at Paris, but ordered him to return to Arras, where in an humble sphere, better suited to the mediocrity of his abilities, he might pursue his profession as a lawyer. Robespierre was compelled to return to Arras; which, after the splendid dreams he had indulged of fame and honours in the capital, was an humiliation he felt keenly, but which he brooded over in silence: for he never on any occasion displayed his sensibility to mortifications, which was in proportion to his excessive vanity, but concentrated within his vindictive soul his disgrace, his resentment, and his projects of vengeance. From the period of his return to Arras may be dated his abhorrence of men of talents. From that moment, instead of admiring genius, he repined at its existence. The same feelings clung to his base and envious spirit when he had usurped his dictatorial power. He made it pain of death to be

the author of what he called seditious publications, by which means it was easy for him to involve men of letters in a general proscription. He suppressed every dramatic piece in which there were any allusions he disliked, or wherein the picture or history held up to view any feature of his own character. And it was his plan to abolish theatrical entertainments altogether; for he considered the applause bestowed on fine poetry as something of which his harangues were defrauded. He held up men of letters to the people as persons hostile to the cause of liberty, and incapable of raising themselves to the height of the revolution; and to make them still greater objects of mistrust and suspicion, he had long instructed his agents to declaim unceasingly against them as *statesmen*; the meaning of which word, in the dictionary of these conspirators, was counter-revolutionist. Their system had even arrived at some maturity, when Brissot, in his speech for an appeal to the people on the trial of the late king, thus portrays them:

“ Il semble à entendre ces hommes qu'on ne puisse être à la hauteur de la révolution, qu'en montant sur des piles de cadavres. Il semble que le secret de l'homme d'état soit maintenant le secret des bourreaux. Veut-on faire entendre le langage de la saine politique ? on est soudoyé par des puissances étrangères. Veut on parler celui de la raison ? c'est de la philosophie toute-pure, s'écrie-t-on; et on accoutume la multitude à mépriser sa bienfaitrice, à diviniser l'ignorance*.”

* “ According to these men, no one can possibly be at the height of the revolution without mounting on heaps of dead. It seems as if the knowledge of the statesman was commensurate only with the skill of the executioner. If we speak a language dictated by sound policy, we are in the pay of foreign powers. Do we speak that of reason ? This is nothing, they exclaim, but the

“ L’ignorance de la multitude est le secret du pouvoir des agitateurs comme des despotes; c’est là le secret de la durée de l’art de calomnier. Voilà pourquoi ils s’élèvent contre la philosophie, qui veut affermir la liberté sur la raison universelle. Voilà pourquoi ils plaisantent sur le système d’éducation, sur l’utilité des écoles primaires. Il s’agit bien de tout cela, c’est de massacres qu’il faut entretenir le peuple. Voilà pourquoi ils supposent, ils accusent sans cesse l’aristocratie du talent. Ah pourquoi le talent? n’est-il qu’un être métaphysique? Avec quel doux plaisir ces Vandales le nivelleroient, si leur faux pourroient l’atteindre *!”

One of the objects of Robespierre’s resentment was M. Bitauby, a Prussian, well known in the literary world by his elegant translation of Homer into French. He was a member of the academy at Berlin, from which the king of Prussia ordered his name to be struck out, and the pension with which the great Frederic had rewarded his merit to be discontinued, on account of his avowed attachment to the principles of the revolution. M. Bitauby had fixed his residence at Paris several years previous to that event. I have been acquainted with him and his lady since my first arrival in France, and have never met with persons who blended with the

dreams of philosophy: and thus the multitude are instructed to despise their benefactress, and deify ignorance.”

* “ The ignorance of the multitude is the master-spring of the power of *anarchists* as well as of despots: it is by this they keep alive the breath of calumny. Furnished with this engine, they make war on philosophy, which teaches us that universal reason is the only basis of liberty; and thus deride every plan of education, and deny the utility of public schools. These are reveries, say they; the people must be re-generated with blood. This is the reason why they are inveighing so continually against the aristocracy of genius. Alas! why has knowledge only a metaphysical existence? With what complacency would not these Vandals bring it to their own level, if their destroying scythe could reach it!”

wisdom and seriousness of age, so much of all that is amiable in youth. M. Bitauby, in the first days of the revolution, had been personally acquainted with Robespierre, who frequently dined at his house; but he was not long in discovering the sanguinary and fanatical ideas of liberty which filled the soul of the tyrant, and which so much disgusted him that he gave up his acquaintance.

Robespierre did not forget the affront, which he had now the power to avenge. M. Bitauby and his wife were dragged to prison in the beginning of the winter, where they languished ten months; and deprived of those cares which their age and their infirmities required, they had almost sunk beneath their weight. Madame Bitauby's indispositions required medical assistance; but so many formalities were necessary before a physician could be admitted into the prison, that, if the disorder was not of a lingering nature, the patient expired while the police were arranging the ceremonials previous to his relief. During the last months of Robespierre's usurpation, the prisoners were refused the consolation of being attended by their own physicians. Professional men were appointed by the police; and as selections were made among those who were able to give clearer proofs of their Jacobin principles than of their medical skill, these revolutionary doctors sometimes robbed the revolutionary jury of their prey. A few however of these "officers of health" possessed the negative merit which Dr. Franklin ascribed to old and experienced physicians, "*they let their patients die,*" for the remedies they administered were of too harmless a nature to be capable of doing mischief. The physician of the Conciergerie had as strong a predilection for tisanne as Dr. Sangrado for hot water. Tisanne was the vivifying draught which was destined to sooth all

pains, and heal all maladies. One day the doctor, after having felt a patient's pulse, said to the jailor, "He is better this morning." "Yes," answered the jailor, "*he* is better, but the person who lay in this bed yesterday is dead." "Eh bien," resumed the doctor coolly, qu'on donne toujours la tisanne."

M. and Madame Bitauby had an advocate in their distress whom it was difficult indeed to resist. This was an old servant of eighty years of age. His figure was so interesting that Sterne's pencil only could sketch it well; and had Sterne seen him, he would not have failed to draw his portrait. He pleaded the cause of his master with such pathetic eloquence, that at the revolutionary committee he sometimes "drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek." But the old man was eloquent in vain, and was sinking with despair into the grave when the revolution of the 9th of Thermidor restored his master and mistress to liberty.

The fate of Boucheu, author of a poem called "The Months," excited particular sympathy. He passed his time in prison, in educating one of his children, and this employment seemed to charm away his cares. The day he received his act of accusation, knowing well the fate that awaited him, he sent his son home, giving him his portrait, which a painter who was his fellow-prisoner had drawn, and which he ordered the child to give his mother. Below the picture he had written the following lines:

"Ne vous etonnez pas, objets charmans et doux,
Si quelqu'air de tristesse obscurcit mon visage;
Lorsqu'un savant crayon deffinoit cet image,
On dressoit l'echafaud, et je pensois a vous."

Lov'd objects, cease to wonder when ye trace
The melancholy air that clouds my face;

Ah! while the painter's skill this image drew,
They rear'd the scaffold, and I thought of you!

La Voisier, the celebrated chemist, was put to death with the other farmers general. He requested a fortnight's respite to enable him to complete a philosophical experiment. The Vandals had no time to pause in their career of blood, for the pursuits of philosophy, and sent him away, observing that the republic had no longer any need of chemists. Chamfort, a member of the French academy, and an enthusiastic advocate for the revolution, with feelings too keen to bear the horrors by which so noble a cause had been stained, hid them from his sight by a voluntary death. La Harpe was thrown into prison, and was destined to perish on the scaffold. The author of the Travels of the younger Anacharsis, notwithstanding his advanced age, was the object of continual persecution. Florian, who was himself imprisoned, and condemned to see his dearest friends perish, had not sufficient fortitude to sustain such trials. His charming pen had displayed the most soothing images of happiness and virtue; and when he beheld around him only misery and crimes, his disordered imagination hastened his death. Vicq d'Azyr died of a broken heart. Bailly, the first mayor of Paris, whose astronomical researches have placed him in the highest rank of science, was murdered with circumstances of particular aggravation. He was to have been executed in the Champ de Mars; but from the caprice of the sanguinary mob, he was compelled to wait two or three hours at the place of execution, while the scaffold was removed to a field adjoining, where he stood drenched in rain, in the midst of winter, and, which was more difficult to

bear than the " pelting of the pitiless storm," exposed to the insults and injuries of an execrable set of wretches who usually attended these horrid spectacles. The red flag was burned before his eyes, and he was compelled to set fire to the pile that consumed it, while the ruffians plunged his head into the smoke for their farther amusement. He submitted to all that was inflicted on him with the serenity of a philosopher, and only requested with mildness, that his sufferings might be terminated. One of the barbarians by whom he was tormented, said to him in a tone of savage mockery, " Tu trembles, Bailly." " Mon ami, c'est de froid*," replied the sage. At length, after having made him drink the cup of bitterness to the very dregs, they permitted him to die.

LETTER IX.

ONE of the particular objects of Robespierre's rage was general Miranda, a native of Peru, well known in Europe by that philanthropic spirit of adventure which led him to pass many years in travelling through various parts of the globe, with the view of being useful to his own country; which, since the period of the sanguinary Spanish conquests, has groaned beneath the yoke of the most abject slavery. If this philosophical enthusiast should not accomplish the purpose for which he undertook his crusade of patriotism, it has at least en-

* " You tremble, Bailly."—" It is with cold, my friend."

abled him to furnish his mind with such acquisitions of knowledge, such stores of observation, and such a distinguished taste for the fine arts, as render his society in the highest degree instructive and delightful; while with an understanding of the first order he unites that perfect simplicity of manners which usually belongs to great minds*.

When the Prussians were on their march towards Paris, Marinda accepted a command in the army of Dumourier, who was then retreating before them. After the defeat of the Prussians, and on the entrance of the republican army into the Low Countries, Miranda added to the high reputation he had already acquired through Europe, by the gallant manner in which he executed that part of the conquest of those countries which was allotted him. When Dumourier came to Paris, the command of the whole army devolved on Miranda; and when the campaign began, and Dumourier was invading Holland, the attack of Maestricht, and the army on the Meuse, were committed to his care. The successful march of the Austrians on Aix-la-Chapelle obliged him to raise the siege; and he was joined soon after by Dumourier, who had left his conquest in Holland to repair the misfortunes of the army commanded by Valence. The ill humour which Dumourier had brought with him from Paris, where the Jacobins had already begun their system of misrule and anarchy, was not less-

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* Dumourier, in his Memoirs, while he does justice to Miranda's talents, complains of his "*haughtiness and hardness of character*." Miranda has certainly more of the sedate dignity of a Spaniard, than the brisk air of a Frenchman; and if that elevation of soul which scorns to make any composition with principles be *haughtiness*, and that inflexibility which steadfastly pursues the straight path of integrity and honour be *hardness of character*, Dumourier is in the right.

fened by ill success; and goaded by the pang of indignation and of disappointed ambition, he formed the criminal design of betraying the republic. This spirit of rebellion found the most inflexible opposition from Miranda, whose personal friendship for Dumourier did not lead him to forget that his first duty was towards that country which had entrusted him with its defence. The event of the battle of Nerwinden, fought against the repeated advice of Miranda, and in which this general lost a considerable part of the troops he commanded, having been forced to sustain the whole shock of the enemy, afforded Dumourier the means of getting rid of an opponent so hostile to his designs: and Miranda was sent by the commissaries La Croix and Danton, without being previously heard by them, to give an account of his conduct at the bar of the convention. He underwent the most strict examination before the committees of war and general safety, who declared, that not the slightest doubt remained of his military conduct, or his fidelity to the republic. But this report was stifled by the intrigues of La Croix, Danton, and others of their party; and he was sent, in defiance of all decency, to the revolutionary tribunal.

His trial took place in the beginning of May, before justice had for ever fled from that sanguinary court. The hour of carnage was not yet arrived: the tribunal, though from its institution terrible, and cruel in its forms, which placed the life of the accused upon a casting voice, had not yet become a shrine consecrated to infernal deities, and reeking with the daily sacrifice of human victims. The voice of innocence was not yet stifled by the savage vociferations of monsters thirsting for its blood; and Miranda pleaded his cause with such sublime energy, as proved that his powers as

an orator were not inferior to his talents as a general. He covered himself with glory, and his enemies with confusion; and overstepping the usual forms, the jury made their verdict the vehicle of eulogium upon his conduct.

After his trial he retired to a small distance from Paris, where he lived in literary leisure, amidst his books and paintings, and where I visited him frequently. His repose was however of short duration. He was too distinguished a character to escape the tyranny which the conspiracy of the 31st of May had established; and after having been persecuted by domiciliary visits on various pretences, he was again thrown into prison, charged with being the chief defender and abettor of the Gironde and Girondism. The real cause of Robespierre's animosity towards him is not well known, but may be resolved into that general hatred which he bore towards all men of talents; and as he knew that the eminent abilities of Miranda were improved by advantages which had fallen to the lot of few, he might naturally think that the existence of such a man was dangerous to his own.

Twice, in the zenith of his tyranny, he accused Miranda to his subjects the Jacobins; and when we heard that the name of Miranda had issued from those pestilential lips, we considered his murder as inevitable. One obstacle was found sufficient to shield him from the tyrant's vengeance; and this was a feeling of shame which lurked in the mind of the public accuser, who, covered as he was with blood, did not dare to meet the look of Miranda, and bring forward a second accusation, after having once joined the general voice of applause upon his acquittal. This sentiment led Fouquier Tainville to put off the second trial required by Robespierre, till the tyrant would hear of delay

and excuses no more; and himself inscribed Miranda's name on the fatal list for the twelfth of Thermidore. The revolution of the tenth restored him to liberty.

Miranda submitted to an imprisonment of eighteen months, under the continual expectation of death, with that philosophical strength of mind which he possesses in a most eminent degree. He had indeed determined not to be dragged to the guillotine, and had therefore provided himself with poison. Thus armed, he sent for a considerable number of books from his library, and placed them in his little chamber, of which he found means to keep the sole possession. Here he told me, that he endeavoured to forget his present situation in the study of history and science. He tried to consider himself as a passenger on a long voyage, who had to fill up the vacuity of time with the researches of knowledge, and was alike prepared to perish or to reach the shore. During his long confinement, the only person with whom he associated was the former marquis Achille Du Cha-

telet, who possessed all the accomplishments of literature, and whom the tyrants had dragged to prison while the wounds were yet unhealed which he had received in defending his country. He and Miranda used to meet every evening, take their tea together, and talk over the books they had read during the day, avoiding as much as possible the subject of politics, which affected them too deeply, nor could Du Chatelet bear to pronounce the names of the decemvirs. Tidings, however, of the horrible scenes which were passing in Paris reached him in the gloom of his prison; and the emotions of his mind, together with the irritation of his wound, produced a fever. Miranda attended him day and night alter-

nately with another prisoner: and he was recovering from this disorder, when he heard that some of his dearest friends had perished on the scaffold. The next morning, when Miranda went to his room to relieve a fellow-prisoner who had watched him during the night, he observed that his whole face was violently inflamed. He enquired eagerly what was the matter. Du Chatelet pressed his hand, and bade him farewell. This unfortunate young man, unable to support the shock occasioned by the murder of his friends, and grown weary of existence, resolved not to wait till the assassins called him to the scaffold, but had recourse to poison, with which he had provided himself. A physician had furnished Vergniaud, Du Chatelet, and several other martyrs to their country, with this lethean remedy, which they called * *la pillule de la liberté*. A note was found in Du Chatelet's chamber, in which he declared that he had sold his books and all that belonged to him in the prison, to Miranda. This was the only mode in which he could leave his effects to his friend, or prevent their being seized by the nation.

Miranda found a memorial among his papers, which he has put into my hands, where he traces the history of his political life. It contains an honourable list of the sacrifices he had made, the labours he had achieved, and the perils he had encountered in the public cause, from the period when in 1789 he contributed in the baillage of Peronne to the union of the nobles with the third estate, till the middle of the year 1793; when, although his wounds were not closed, he desired leave to return to the army, and obtained the command of

* The pill of liberty.

the district of Aire. But he soon found that his infirmities did not permit him to fulfil the duties of his station:—he was obliged to return; and though his fortune was now lost, he refused to accept his pay as a general officer, since he was no longer able to serve his country. At the very moment when he was preparing to return home, he was arrested by the revolutionary committee at Aire, as a measure of “*general safety*,” and conducted with guards to the committee of general safety of the convention, who, with the same tender regard for public security, instead of declaring that this gallant young officer had merited well of his country, sent him to the prison of the Force, and refused to let his servant enter for a few minutes in the day to dress his wound. His prison six months after became his grave, and he was placed beyond the reach of tyranny. Miranda was then left to absolute solitude; but he had still the courage to live, and at length the hour of deliverance arrived.

You will perhaps think, dear sir, that the sketch which I have given you of public and private calamity is sufficiently gloomy. But, alas! the scene blackens as we advance, and wears a deeper horror. We have now arrived at that period when the tyrant, grown bolder by success, intoxicated with power, and throwing aside all regard even to forms, reaching the climax of his crimes, and accelerated the moment of his fall. You will view him and the agents of his iniquity no longer satisfied with victims in detail: they now murder in *mass*, and, in the words of Racine,

“*Lavent dans le sang leurs bras ensanglantés.*”

I shall in the course of a fortnight send you a history of the last scenes of this foul tragedy, and give

you such a detail, as can only be learnt on the spot, of the events which produced the revolution of the 9th of Thermidor, and of the incidents which on that memorable night determined the fate of the French republic.

In the mean time, you will not exclaim as the Roman poet did with respect to religion, "Of so many evils could Liberty have been the cause!" It is, alas! the condition of our uninstructed nature, that nations like individuals should acquire wisdom only in the school of experience; and though the page of history, which according to Lord Bolingbroke is "philosophy teaching by example," be open before us, we are too presumptuous, or too careless, to heed or apply the lesson. I need not make use of any reasoning to convince you that Liberty is innocent of the outrages committed under its borrowed sanction; for though we might from some momentary impulse blaspheme its name, as Lucretius did that of religion, we must be persuaded that neither religion nor liberty is chargeable with the crimes committed by tyranny or superstition. As no weeds are more pernicious than those which arise in that soil from which good fruit alone should have sprung, so no crimes have exceeded those which the tyrant and the fanatic have committed in the name of Freedom, the guardian angel of the happiness of mankind, and in that of the Being "whose tender mercies are over all his works."

I must not conclude without informing you, that the dark picture which you have been contemplating is relieved by a bright and soothing perspective. The past seems like one of those frightful dreams which presents to the disturbed spirit phantoms of undescrivable horror, and "deeds without a name;" awakened from which, we hail with rapture the

cheering beams of the morning, and anticipate the meridian lustre of the day. The 9th of Thermidor has established the republic; and nothing now remains but to arrange its forms. Its internal situation will no more offer a hideous contrast to its external victories. The guilty commune of Paris exists no longer; the den of the Jacobins is closed; and the whole nation, roused into a sense of its danger by the terrible lesson it has been taught, can be oppressed no more. There scarcely exists a family or an individual in France, that has not been bereaved by tyranny of some dear relation, some chosen friend, who seems from the grave to call upon them with a warning voice to watch over the liberties of their country. The love of public virtue in the people of France is now blended with all the sympathies and affections of their natures: it is heard in the sighs of general mourning; it speaks in the tears of the widow and the orphan; and is not only imprinted by every argument that can render it sacred and durable on the understanding, but clings to every feeling of the heart.

LETTER X.

Paris.

MY DEAR SIR,

WHILE far along the moral horizon of France the tempest became every hour more black and turbulent, the spring, earlier and more profuse of graces than in the climate of England, arose in its unfullied freshness, and formed a contrast at which humanity sickened. The lovely environs of Paris are

not, like those of London, so encumbered with houses and buildings that you must travel ten or twelve miles from town to find the country, but, the moment you have passed the barriers of the city, present you with all the charming variety of vine-clad hills, and fields, and woods, and lawns. Immediately after our release from prison we quitted our apartments in the centre of the town, and tried to shelter ourselves from observation in an habitation situated in the most remote part of the fauxbourg Germain. From thence a few minutes walk led us to the country. But we no longer dared, as we had done the preceding year, to forget awhile the horrors of our situation by wandering occasionally amidst the noble parks of St. Cloud, the wild woods of Meudon, or the elegant gardens of Bellevue, all within an hour's ride of Paris. Those seats, once the residence of fallen royalty, were now haunted by vulgar despots, by revolutionary commissaries, by spies of the police, and sometimes by the sanguinary decemvirs themselves. Often they held their festive orgies in those scenes of beauty, where they dared to cast their polluting glance on nature, and tread with profane steps her hallowed recesses. Even the revolutionary jury used sometimes on a decadi, the only day of suspension from their work of death, to go to Marly or Versailles; and, steeped as they were to the very lips in blood, without being haunted by the mangled spectres of those whom they had murdered the preceeding day, they saw nature in her most benign aspect, pleading the cause of humanity and mercy, and returned to feast upon the groans of those whom they were to murder on the morrow.

Those regions of decorated beauty being now forbidden ground, we confined our walks to some pasturage lands near the town, which were inter-

spersed with a few scattered hamlets, and skirted by hills, and were so unfrequented, that we heard no sounds except the sheep-bell, and the nightingale, and saw no human figure but an old peasant with a white beard, who together with a large black dog took care of the flock. It was in these walks that the soul, which the scenes of Paris petrified with terror, melted at the view of the soothing landscape, and that the eye was lifted up to heaven with tears of resignation mingled with hope. I have no words to paint the strong feeling of reluctance with which I always returned from our walks to Paris, that den of carnage, that slaughter-house of man. How I envied the peasant his lonely hut ! for I had now almost lost the idea of social happiness. My disturbed imagination divided the communities of men but into two classes, the oppressor and the oppressed ; and peace seemed only to exist with solitude.

On the 15th of Germinal (the beginning of April,) the committee of public safety, or rather of public extermination, caused a law to be passed, ordering all the former nobility and strangers to leave Paris within ten days, under the penalty of being put out of the law ; which meant, that if found in Paris after that period, they were to be led to the scaffold without a trial, as soon as their persons were identified. This law, to which my family and myself were subject, was a part of the plan of general proscription that Robespierre had formed against nobles and foreigners ; and which he was now impatient to put in force. We were ordered by the decree, after choosing the place of our retreat, to present ourselves at the revolutionary committee of our respective sections, who delivered to each of us not a passport, but what was called a pass, on which was written a declaration that we left Paris

in conformity to the law of the 26th of Germinal. Thus we were condemned to wander into the country with this pass, which was the mark of Cain upon our foreheads, and which under pain of imprisonment we were to deposit at the municipality where we bent our course; and we were also condemned to present ourselves every twenty-four hours before the municipality, and inscribe our names on a list, which was to be dispatched every decade to the committee of public safety. And lest the country municipalities should mistake the intentions of the committee, and treat particular individuals with lenity upon their producing testimonies of their attachment to the cause of the revolution, these devoted victims were ordered by a decree to burn every certificate of civism of which they might happen to be in possession. We chose for the place of our retreat a little village half a mile distant from Marly, and with hearts overwhelmed with anguish bade adieu to my sister, who, being married to a Frenchman, was exempted from the law; and we were once more driven from our home, not to return under the penalty of death. Our neighbours came weeping to our gate to take leave of us; and the poor, who were the only class which now dared to utter a complaint, murmured loudly at the injustice of the decree. We were obliged to pass the square of the revolution, where we saw the guillotine erected, the crowd assembled for the bloody tragedy, and the *gens d'armes* on horseback, followed by victims who were to be sacrificed, entering the square. Such was the daily spectacle which had succeeded the painted shows, the itinerant theatres, the mountebank, the dance, the song, the shifting scenes of harmless gaiety, which used to attract the cheerful crowd as they passed from the *Thuilleries* to the *Champs Elisés*.

When we reached the barrier we were stopped by a concourse of carriages filled with former nobles, and were obliged to wait till our passes were examined in our turn. The procession at the gate was singular and affecting. Most of the fugitives having, like ourselves, deferred their departure till the last day, and it being the forfeiture of our heads to be found in Paris the day following, the demand for carriages was so great, and the price exacted by those who let them out, and who knew the urgency of the case, so exorbitant, that a coach or chariot was a luxury which fell only to the lot of a favoured few. The greater number were furnished with cabriolets, which seemed from their tottering condition somewhat emblematical of decayed nobility; and many who found even these crazy vehicles too costly, journeyed in the carts which transported their furniture, seated upon the chairs they were conveying to their new abodes.

We reached our little dwelling at the hour of sun-set. The hills were fringed with clouds, which still reflected the fading colours of the day; the woods were in deep shadow; a soft veil was thrown over nature, and objects indistinctly seen were decorated by imagination with those graces which were most congenial to the feelings of the moment. The air was full of delicious fragrance, and the stillness of the scene was only disturbed by sounds the most soothing in nature, the soft rustling of the leaves, or the plaintive notes of the wood-pigeon. The tears which the spectacle of the guillotine had petrified with horror, now flowed again with melancholy luxury. Our habitation was situated within a few paces of the noble park of Marly; and the deserted alleys overgrown with long grass—the encumbering fragments of rock, over which once fell the mimic cascades, whose streams no longer mur-

mur—the piles of marble which once formed the bed of crystal basons—the scattered machinery of the jets d’eaux, whose sources are dried—the fallen statues—the defaced symbols of feudality—the weeds springing between the stone steps of the ascent to the deserted palace—the cobwebbed windows of the gay pavillions, were all in union with that pensiveness of mind which our present circumstances naturally excited. And here, where we could see nothing of Paris but the distant dome of the Pantheon, we should have been less unhappy, if we had not too well known that the committee of public safety had not sent nobles and foreigners into the country to enjoy the freshness of rural gales, or the beauty of the opening spring, but as the first step towards a general proscription; and as we passed every evening through the park of Marly, in order to appear before the municipality, that appalling idea “breathed a browner horror over the woods.” We were again rescued from the general danger by the two benevolent commissaries of the revolutionary committee of our section, who when they came to conduct us to prison had treated us with so much gentleness, who had afterwards reclaimed us of the administration of police, and who now, unsolicited and even unasked, went to the committee of public safety, declared they would answer for us with their lives, and caused us to be put into requisition; a form which enabled us to return to Paris, and thus snatched us from the class of the suspected and the proscribed. To their humanity we probably owe our existence; and I shall ever recollect with gratitude that noble courage which led them amidst the cruel impulse of revolutionary government, the movement of which was accelerated as it went on, to pause and succour the unfortunate. I have the satisfaction of adding, that

those commissaries are now at liberty on account of their general good conduct, while scarcely any other members of revolutionary committees have escaped imprisonment. Our benefactors have indeed a right to this honourable exception; who, although appointed the immediate agents of terror, the order of the day, regulated their actions by the eternal code of humanity.

A short time before our departure from Paris, the guillotine, upon which so many innocent victims had been sacrificed, for once streamed with the blood of the guilty:

“ The guilty only were of life bereft:

“ Alas! the guilty only then were left!”

LUCAN'S PHARSALIA.

One of the secrets of Robespierre's government was to employ as the step-ladders of his ambition men whose characters were marked with opprobrium, or stained with crimes. Such men were best suited to his purpose; since they were not likely to pause in the execution of his orders, depending upon his favour, perhaps, for shelter from legal punishment; and when they had fulfilled the part he allotted them, and he no longer stood in need of their agency, he had sufficient address to lead them to make some extravagant proposition, which he denominated *ultra-revolutionary*, and for which he sent them to the scaffold, even with the approbation of the public. Such was the sentiment excited by the execution of Hebert, one of the chiefs of the municipality of Paris, whose arrest by the commission of twelve, previously to the thirty-first of May, had served the conspirators as the signal for ringing that fatal tocsin which was the knell of liberty. Hebert was the man who upon the trial of Marie

Antoinette outraged all the feelings of nature, by an accusation which wrung from her bursting heart that affecting appeal to every mother who was present. It was he who loaded her with the indignity of gross abuse, and poured the bitterness of insult into the cup of death. He soon after acted again at the revolutionary tribunal the part of evidence against the twenty-one; those virtuous patriots, the Sidneys and the Russels of their country, whose martyrdom has been avenged, not as they wished, but as they predicted, by scenes of universal desolation and despair.

Hebert was commonly called *Pere du Chesne*, on account of a daily paper he published, bearing that title. In this paper he professed to tread in the steps of Marat, and indeed he proved himself worthy to be his lineal successor. He had the same insatiable thirst of blood; he demanded with the same vehemence the heads of all conspirators, nobles, bankers, writers and merchants, the faction of federalists, and the faction of Pitt and Cobourg. Those mild demands were breathed in the language of the lowest vulgar: every line was enforced by an oath, and every period rounded by an imprecation. Camille Desmoulins, after drawing the character of this journal, concluded by saying that it was written "*pour faire les délices de Coblenz, et le seul espoir de Pitt* *." Such was Hebert! who having succeeded with his colleagues of the municipality in accomplishing what they called the revolution of the 31st of May, felt with indignation that his revolutionary genius was forced to bend before the genius of Robespierre, and determined to immortalize the month of Ventose by a new revolution.

* To form the delight of Coblenz, and the only hope of Pitt.

They had hitherto met with such splendid success in insurrection, that they began to think it was no very difficult enterprise, now that the routine was known. It was but to ring the tocsin, beat the generale, put the city under arms, take the direction of the military force, overthrow the committee of public safety, and seize the reins of government. The ides of March, however, proved as fatal to the dominion of the red cap, as they had heretofore done to that of the purple robe. In vain Hebert mounted the tribune at the Cordeliers, asserted that tyranny existed, and caused a black veil to be thrown over the table of the rights of man—in vain the section of Marat declared itself in insurrection: the other sections of Paris were of opinion, that to go from the committee of public safety to the municipality was flying from Scylla to Charybdis; and though all France groaned under the tyranny of the committee, there was little hope that the wounds of the bleeding country would be healed by men who were the leaders of massacre, and the preachers of the agrarian law. The Parisians therefore applauded the decree which sent Hebert and twenty of his co-adjutors in revolutionary crimes to that sanguinary tribunal, which, after a mockery of trial, ordered them to execution, “and bade the cruel feel the pains they gave.” There appeared so much of retribution in the circumstances that attended the death of Hebert and his colleagues, that it seemed as if Heaven were visibly stretching forth its arm to punish the guilty. For it is remarkable enough, that they were not tried for any of the multiplied crimes they had committed, but for having asserted that tyranny existed: a sacred truth which every heart swelled to acknowledge, though no lips but theirs had dared to give it utterance.—The behaviour of Hebert

and his associates upon the approach of death was far different from that of the innocent sufferers who had consciences void of reproach. Along those subterraneous galleries where all the light which entered was "darkness visible," terrific phantoms covered with blood seemed to pursue their steps, and with menacing looks prepare to drag them to abysses of deeper horror: they fancied they saw the headless trunks of murdered victims encumbering the ground; they heard human groans and shrieks sounding hollow through the vaulted passages; while the knife of the guillotine, like Macbeth's aerial dagger, hung suspended before their affrighted imagination. Anacharsis Clootz, a Prussian baron and a member of the national convention, known by the title which he conferred upon himself, of orator of the human race, suffered death with this band of ruffians. He was also a preacher of blood; but, cruelty being the order of the day, what most distinguished him from others was not the ferocity of his principles, but the chimeras of his imagination. His publications which were numerous, were always dated *Paris, chef lieu du globe**; and he seriously proposed, that as soon as all the potentates of the earth were overthrown, an event of which he had a bird's eye view from the beginning of the French revolution, the people of every nation should send their representatives to Paris, who should be honoured with seats in the national assembly of France, and there form an universal republic, of which France should be the centre, and the other kingdoms of the world the departments. He proposed for instance, that as soon as the deputies of the English nation arrived, England should take the name of le département de la Tamise†.

* Paris, capital of the globe.

† The department of the Thames.

Soon after the memorable 10th of August, Anacharxis marched to the bar of the legislative assembly at the head of a number of men he had hired to represent the natives of every quarter of the globe; and who were clad in the respective dresses of the people they personated. This embassy of the human race declared, by the organ of their common orator Anacharxis, their admiration of the French republic, and their attachment to its cause. The conclusion of this drama however was less splendid than the opening scene at the bar of the convention; for the next morning the door of Anacharxis was beset with Italians, Germans, Swedes, Poles, Jews, Turks and Russians, clamorously demanding to be paid: but none were more noisy in their vociferations than a Calmuck Tartar, and an Indian of the banks of the Ohio, who menaced their orator with the vengeance of the whole fauxbourg of St. Antoine, if he refused to pay them for the loss of their day's labour, and the hire of their dresses. Anacharxis, after much altercation, came to a compromise with the deputation of the human race, who departed not very well satisfied with their champion.—Cloutz met death with more firmness than might have been expected from his general character, and his atheistical principles. Hebert and his colleagues passed their time, when together, like the fallen spirits in Milton, in mutual accusation, till Cloutz with a loud voice recited to them those well known lines:

“ Je revois cette nuit, que de mal consumé,
Côté à côté d'un gueux on m'avoit inhumé;
Et que, blessé pour moi d'un pareil voisinage,
En mort de qualité je lui tins ce langage.”

This citation had the effect he wished: they became reconciled to each other; and Cloutz, whose

only apprehension was lest any of them should die in religious belief, preached atheism to them till their last sigh.

The death of Hebert was the signal for throwing off the hideous masquerade of sansculottism, in which all the world had been arrayed during the winter, in submissive deference to his interpretation of equality. Immediately after his execution, the scene suddenly changed: black wigs, red caps, sailors' jackets, and pantaloons were cast aside; and the eye was refreshed with the sight of combed locks, clean linen, and decent apparel;—while the women, who for some months had reluctantly bound up their hair beneath the round cap of the peasant, now unfolded their tresses, perfumed and powdered, to the vernal gales, and decorated in whatever manner they thought proper, provided the national cockade formed one of their ornaments.

LETTER XI.

THE execution of Hebert and his colleagues was soon followed by that of a considerable number of the mountain deputies, among whom were Danton and Camille Desmoulins, names not unknown to fame in the annals of the revolution. Danton had acted a distinguished part on the political theatre, before Robespierre had been heard of; and Camille Desmoulins, on the day preceding the taking of the Bastille, had the glory of being the first man in France who placed the national cockade in his hat, and called upon his fellow-citi-

zens to shake off the fetters of despotism. And surely it was glorious to be a leader of the revolution; for, although the sun of liberty, like the orb of day when seen through opposing mists, has been turned into blood, its dawning beams were radiant, and it will again shake off the foul vapours that have hung around it, and spread that unsullied light which exhilarates all nature.

Robespierre was not deterred from marking Danton and Camille Desmoulins as his victims, by the consideration that Danton had saved him at the moment when Louvet's representation of his crimes on the 2d of September had so strongly excited the indignation of the convention, that a decree of accusation was on the point of being hurled against him; and that Camille Desmoulins had been his school-fellow and his friend. But the tyrant felt that Danton was too "near the throne;" and Camille Desmoulins had awakened all his fury by an appeal which he made to the people, in a paper called the "Old Cordelier," and which found an echo in every heart. The excessive severity of the revolutionary law against the suspected had excited Desmoulin's indignation; and in a happy parallel between the capricious tyrannies of the Roman emperors and those of the committees of government*, he expanded the glowing precision of Tacitus into charges so extremely ludicrous, that they honoured lord Shaftesbury's axiom, that ridicule is the test of truth. This publication made some atonement to humanity for the mischiefs which his former writings had produced; above all, that cruel pleasantry upon the party of the Gironde, on which their act of accusation was founded. The atonement came too late; tyranny was established; and Camille

* See Appendix, No. IV.

Desmoulins perished, to use his own words, "for having shed one tear over the unhappy."

Several other deputies suffered at the same time; and Camille Desmoulins observed when he was going to the scaffold, "*Robespierre fait des coups percés de la convention*," alluding to the mode of cutting down the forests in France by portions, which are marked to be hewn at certain periods. The person most regretted among the deputies who now perished was Philippeaux, who having been sent on a mission to the Vendée, made known at his return the horrors of which he had been a witness, and was dragged to the scaffold for having dared to lift up the veil which the conspirators had thrown over their crimes. Fabre d'Eglantine, who had been one of the founders of the revolutionary government and auxiliary of Robespierre, perished unlamented. He possessed fine talents for literature, and had written a celebrated comedy, entitled *Philine*. It was observed, that he had carried the spirit of intrigue which prevailed in his comedy into the part he had acted as legislator. The love of fame, the prevailing passion of authors, he felt strong in death; and all his thoughts seemed fixed upon a comedy of five acts, which he had deposited at the committee of public safety, and of which he was afraid Billaud Varennes would take the credit. Fabre d'Eglantine was also the author of the new French calendar. Danton, while at the Conciergerie, often conversed with the prisoners across the bars of his dungeon. He seemed ashamed of having been duped by Robespierre, with whom, by means of a common friend, he had an interview a few days before he was arrested, in order that they might come to an explanation. Danton, after a long conversation, finding that he was unable to move the implacable Robespierre, who listened to him with a look of

insulting malignity, shed some tears, and left the room, saying, "Je vois que mon sort est décidé, mais ma mort sera votre ruine*." This prediction was fulfilled; for no sooner had Robespierre rid himself of all his rivals than he pressed forward with a more rapid course towards his own destruction. Danton in his dungeon expatiated continually on the charms of nature, on the beauties of rural scenery, and the peace of rural shades. "In revolutions," cried he, "the power always remains in the hands of villains. It is better to be a poor fisherman than to govern men. Those fools! they will cry 'Long live the republic!' on seeing me pass to the scaffold.—This day last year I caused the revolutionary tribunal to be instituted. I ask pardon of God and of men; it was not that it should become the scourge of humanity; it was to prevent the renewal of the massacres of September." Camille Desmoulins and Danton, who had both possessed considerable powers of eloquence, defended themselves at the tribunal with so lofty a spirit, and treated their judges with so much disdain, that at length irritated by their contempt and the sallies of their wit, and impatient at their perseverance in vindicating themselves when it was determined they should die, the public accuser sent a letter to the convention, informing them that the prisoners were in a state of revolt against the tribunal. The committee of public safety caused a decree to be passed which put them out of the law, and sent instantly to execution all such of the accused as dared to insult their judges. In vain Danton called upon Barrere, upon Billaud Varennes, and upon other members of the committee of public safety to appear in evidence. Danton was left to

* "I see that my fate is decided, but my death will be your ruin."

his fate, and sent with his colleagues to execution. At the gate of the Conciergerie, while the executioner was placing the condemned deputies in the carts, Danton amused the crowd who were looking on by many sportive observations. He said to Fabre d'Eglantine, who was a poet, *Eh bien, nous deviendrons tous poetes, nous allons tous faire des vers**." On his way to the scaffold his head was bare, and many persons were struck with its resemblance to the medals of Socrates. He behaved with remarkable firmness, conversing with those who were placed in the same cart, and sometimes answering the cries of the populace by looks of strong indignation. When he was tied to the plank he cast his eyes upwards to the fatal knife, and his countenance and figure assumed an expression of magnanimity with which the spectators were deeply penetrated.

"Pale heads of Marian chiefs are borne on high,
Or heap'd together on the forum lie;
There join the meeting slaughters of the town,
There each performing villain's deeds are known."

LUCAN'S PHARSALIA.

A proof of the horrible oppression under which we groaned, was, that we lamented the fate of Danton—of Danton, the minister of justice on the 2d of September, and one of the murderers of liberty on the 31st of May! Yet with all these crimes upon his head, Danton still possessed some human affections: his mind was still awake to some of the sensibilities of our nature; his temper was frank and social, and humanity in despair leant upon him as a sort of refuge from its worst oppressor.

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* An equivocal on the word *vers*, which in French signifies worms as well as verses.

A week after the death of Camille Desmoulins, his wife, a charming woman of twenty-three years of age, was led to the scaffold. For her fate no eye except those of her barbarous judges refused a tear. Her execution forms an epocha in the annals of the revolutionary government; since on that occasion, for the first time, a conspiracy supposed in a prison became the pretext for murder, and multitudes afterwards perished the victims of that fatal invention. Camille Desmoulins was in habits of friendship with Arthur Dillon, an Irish general, who had bravely defended the pass in the forest of Argonne against the Prussian army, and who held the highest rank in the service of the republic. Soon after the the 31st of May, he was arrested with multitudes *soupçonnés d'être suspects* *, and was confined in the prison of the Luxembourg. His hopes of regaining his liberty rested upon the influence of his friend Camille Desmoulins, and he was deeply affected by the intelligence of his being sent to the revolutionary tribunal. In his affliction he made use of some imprudent expressions to a fellow prisoner, and seemed to flatter himself with the hope that the people would not suffer such a patriot as Desmoulins to perish. The wretch to whom Dillon confided these sentiments had the atrocity to write a denunciation against him to the committee of general safety, with the view of purchasing his own freedom by the life of his unfortunate companion. Dillon had also, a few days before Desmoulins perished, written a letter to his wife, expressing his sympathy in her misfortunes, and his hope that the innocence of her husband would yet triumph. In this letter Dillon enclosed three thousand livres. All these circumstances were made known to the committee; and a few days after the

* Upon a suspicion of being suspected.

execution of Desmoulins, Dillon, the turnkey to whom he had offered the letter, and Madame Desmoulins in the first transports of grief upon the loss of a husband whom she tenderly loved, were sent by an order of the committee to the Conciergerie to take their trial at the revolutionary tribunal. It appeared upon the trial that the turnkey had refused to take the letter; upon which Dillon had slipped it into his pocket; which the turnkey perceiving, returned it to him immediately, and Dillon tore it in pieces. Madame Desmoulins, it was therefore clear, had never received the letter or the three thousand livres enclosed. She answered the interrogatories of her judges with the candour of innocence, and the sweet complacency of her manner sensibly affected the spectators. Those assassins in the robes of justice condemned Dillon to die as the author of a conspiracy in the prisons against the security of the French people; the turnkey was sent to death for having had sufficient humanity not to make a declaration to the police of Dillon's proposition respecting the letter; and the unfortunate Madame Desmoulins was dragged to the scaffold because a letter was written to her which it was clearly proved had never been sent. In the first anguish of separation from the object of our affections, death ceases to be an evil; and Madame Desmoulins deplored her husband too tenderly to regret that they were going to be reunited in a happier state of existence. She dressed herself in white, and with some care; and went with a placid smile upon her countenance to execution, conversing with her companions in the cart, particularly with the wife of Hebert, who was put to death at the same time, and met her fate with equal firmness. It was one of the singular chances of these revolutionary moments, that Camille Des-

moulins, who with the pointed shafts of his wit had overthrown the idol of the populace Hebert, perished himself but a fortnight later; and that his own wife and the wife of Hebert, seated on the same stone in the Conciergerie, deplored their mutual loss, and were led together to the scaffold. The people, as Madame Desmoulins passed along the streets to execution, could not resist uttering exclamations of pity and admiration. "Comme elle est belle! elle a l'air si doux! quel dommage qu'elle va périr*!" At the foot of the scaffold she embraced the wife of Hebert, bade her companions in the cart farewell, and resigned herself to the executioner with the serenity of an angel. Dillon went to death with great composure, and, as he passed to execution, bowed to a friend of his and mine whom he saw in the street. Far different from the meek and placid resignation with which Madame Desmoulins made the sacrifice of life in all its bloom and freshness, was the behaviour of Chaumette procureur of the commune, and Gobet the archbishop of Paris, who perished at the same time. Their aspect testified that death appeared to their perturbed spirits, not in the form he wears to suffering innocence, to whom he comes the messenger of peace, but armed with all his stings, and clad in all his terrors.

Chaumette, one of the leaders of the conspiracy of the 31st of May, saw himself dragged to the scaffold by the man whom he had powerfully contributed to raise to supreme eminence, and for a measure by which he expected to confirm his own popularity, which was overthrowing the altars of the catholic church. And Gobet, the archbishop

* "How beautiful she is! how mild she looks! what a pity she should perish!"

of Paris, a weak old man, whom Chaumette and Anacharsis Clootz had persuaded to go with the municipality to the bar of the convention, and at sixty-seven years of age declare that the profession of his life had been imposture, that he renounced the christian faith and his ecclesiastical dignity, and demanded that the churches consecrated to religious worship should henceforth become the temples of Reason, was punished for his apostacy with death. Robespierre embraced the new doctrine till the church was despoiled of all the treasures with which superstition had enriched it, and soon after abolished the *decadary* feasts of the goddess Reason, and sent her high priests Gobet and Chaumette to the guillotine. One of the few instances of fortitude in death exemplified by persons who had neither the consciousness of innocence nor the sentiment of sympathy to sooth their minds in so severe a trial, was that of the former duke of Orleans, in whose life nothing was worthy of applause except his manner of leaving it. The remembrance of the vote he had given against his unfortunate relation Lewis XVI. from motives of personal vengeance and ambition, could not but gnaw upon his heart, and depress his spirit, and must have been mingled not only with a feeling of indignation against the wretches who made him suffer upon false pretences, but with all the anguish of remorse for having joined their party; by which act of debasement he had incurred not only guilt, but its speedy punishment. Yet notwithstanding such reflections could not fail to embitter his last moments, he went to execution with a calm dignity worthy of a better mind. Nor did he gratify the populace by betraying any emotion when the cart in which he was placed stopped for ten minutes before the gate of the Palais-Royal, the scene

of a life of luxurious pleasures. He looked at the building with apparent unconcern; and whatever pangs of recollection might struggle at his heart, his behaviour expressed no sentiment but that of magnanimity till he expired.

The resignation and courage with which the victims of this cruel tyranny in general resigned life were truly admirable. Many young persons, after receiving their act of accusation, composed verses written with a pencil at the table where they partook their last repast with their fellow-prisoners. The following, written by a young man of twenty-four years of age, to his mistress, the night before his execution, are simple and affecting:

I.

L'heure avance où je vais mourir,
L'heure sonne et la mort m'appelle :
Je n'ai point de laches désirs,
Je ne fuirai point devant elle :
Je meurs plein de foi, plein d'honneur :
Mais je laisse ma douce amie
Dans le veuvage et la douleur—
Ah! je dois regretter la vie!

II.

Demain, mes yeux inanimés
Ne s'ouvriront plus sur tes charmes;
Tes beaux yeux à l'amour fermés
Demain seront noyés de larmes.
La mort glacera cette main
Qui m'unit à ma douce amie!
Je ne vivrai plus sur ton sein—
Ah! je dois regretter la vie!

IMITATION.

I.

The hour that calls to death is near,
 It brings to me no throb of fear;
 The breast that honour arms, can brave
 The murd'rer's steel, th' untimely grave;
 But thou, to whom I gave my heart,
 From thee for ever must I part,
 And leave my mourning love to sigh?
 Ah, 'tis a cruel task to die!

II.

To-morrow, my clos'd eyes no more
 Shall gaze on beauty I adore:
 To-morrow, sadd'ning every grace,
 Unceasing tears shall bathe thy face;
 To-morrow, chill'd by death's cold grasp,
 This hand no longer thine shall clasp;
 From thee for ever I shall fly—
 Ah, 'tis a cruel task to die!

Among the crowds who were led to the guillotine, two persons only displayed strong marks of dismay and terror. One of these persons was Madame du Barry, the mistress of Lewis XV. She had been induced to leave England, where she passed some time after the revolution, and return to France, in order to secure her property; and soon after the 31st of May was led from her beautiful pavillion at Lucienne, to a prison in Paris, by one of the agents of *terrorism*, who, I am sorry to add, was an Englishman. The prisons, to use a French mode of expression, in a short time became the anti-chambers of the scaffold; and Madame du Barry's mind was impressed strongly with a presage of her fate. Whenever the door of her chamber

in the prison opened, she was seized with violent trembling, and sometimes with fainting fits. At length the fatal summons to the revolutionary tribunal arrived. The chief evidence against her was a negro slave, whom she had reared from an infant, and to whom she was so much attached, that he was generally to be found in her apartments; and one day Lewis XV. sportively created him governor of Lucienne, with a pension of six hundred livres a year, which this viper, who stung the bosom that cherished him, still enjoys.

One of the most flagrant testimonies which were produced of Madame du Barry's counter-revolutionary principles was Mr. Pitt's picture, which she said had been given to her the night before her departure from London by Lord Thurlow. This unfortunate woman was condemned to die; and a person of my acquaintance who was at that time a prisoner in the Conciergerie told me, that she was deluded with the promise of pardon provided she would discover the spot where she acknowledged that some treasures were concealed; but no sooner were they found, than she was ordered to execution. During her passage thither she appeared almost dead, and leaned her head upon the shoulder of the executioner. But when she reached the square of the revolution, the sight of the instrument of death rallied her sinking spirits, and called forth the most cruel agonies of reluctant nature. She rent the air with her shrieks, and was deaf to the expostulations of Noil, a deputy of the Gironde who perished at the same time, and who encouraged her to resign herself to a fate which was inevitable. Her convulsed frame acquired extraordinary strength: she struggled with her executioners, and, after a conflict at which

humanity shudders, was forced to undergo the fatal stroke, and released from frantic desperation.

With Madame du Barry perished the banker Vanderuyver, and his two sons, accused of being her accomplices in sending money into England, and also of having aided the knights of the poniard, as they were called, in the chateau of the Thuilleries, on the memorable 10th of August, although twenty-five witnesses attended to prove that Vanderuyver had not quitted his house during the whole of that day. But those who first appeared in his favour being arrested as they went out of court, the others made their escape, and left this unhappy family to their fate.

Their real crime was their great wealth, which it was thought expedient to seize. On this account bankers were the objects of particular proscription; for although the great revolutionary financier Cambon had one day called them all together, and favoured them with an harangue of considerable length upon the value of paper money, and the worthlessness of gold, which he asserted every real lover of his country ought to despise as dross, and of which he exhorted them to rid themselves as fast as possible; it was feared that in spite of this precious morsel of eloquence, an obstinate attachment to metallic coin still lurked in the hearts of the bankers, who were for the most part punished for this grovelling predilection with death. Of this number was Laborde, once the banker of the court, and now guilty of a revenue of two millions of livres. This respectable old man was dragged to the scaffold at seventy-six years of age, although since the first epocha of the revolution he had given unquestionable proofs of his attachment to its cause, and the magnificence of his donations were more than proportionate to his wealth. His first patrio-

tic gift was twenty thousand louis ; he had sent all the fine horses with which his stables were filled to the municipality ; he had lodged troops of national guards at his house ; and above all, he had been the father of the country where his fine seat of Meriville was placed. The year before his death I had passed some very agreeable days at that noble mansion, where strangers properly recommended were received and entertained with the most splendid hospitality. The pleasure-grounds had been formed in a flat situation unfavourable to beauty. With immense labour and expence pastoral hills arose, and jutting rocks hung over crystal waters, or were worn into fragments by the fall of lavish cascades. A beautiful Grecian temple reared its Corinthian pillars upon a broad green ascent, and amidst the deep recesses of spreading oaks a monument was erected to Captain Cook. Perhaps the decorated scenes of Meriville are somewhat too richly hung with ornaments, but in creating this blooming Eden, which was the work of years, Monsr. Laborde had given employment to the whole country. For a great extent of space round his dwelling no wants were felt which his munificence was not eager to relieve ; and when the eye saw him, it blessed him. Nor was the good he conferred confined to the precincts of his own possessions. The Paris markets were often supplied with such articles of living as were most wanted, at the very time when its owner was languishing in prison. With tears and lamentations his tenants heard of his confinement. Whole villages and municipalities crowded to the bar of the convention, and claimed the enlargement of their common benefactor, but in vain. The rich spoils of his chateau were too tempting to be resisted, the seizure of his immense property was an expedient of fi-

nance, and as a preliminary step to its confiscation he was put to death.

I have mentioned among the multitudes who perished, that Madame du Barry and one other person only were remarked for having betrayed symptoms of weakness and terror in their last moments. You will be surprised to hear that this person was general Custine.

Who combats bravely is not therefore brave :
He fears a death-bed like the meanest slave.

This unfortunate general, although accustomed to look upon death with intrepidity in the ranks of battle, shrunk from it in a form of horror for which he was unprepared. His son, an amiable and accomplished young man, who suffered a few months after as the accomplice of his father, because he had given proofs of filial affection, behaved with admirable courage. I shall transcribe a letter which he sent to his wife on the day of his execution*.

This interesting young woman had the courage, during the trial of her father-in-law the general, to sit at his feet at the tribunal, to wipe the damps from his brow, to animate his failing spirits, and calm the agitation of his mind by her soothing attentions. After seeing her husband dragged to the scaffold, she was thrown into prison, from which she was one of the last persons released.

Early in the spring Madame Elizabeth was brought before the revolutionary tribunal. The only crime that could be imputed to her was that she was the sister of a king, and had shewn that steadfast fidelity to her brother, which in generous

* See Appendix, No. V.

minds, whatever might be their political opinions, would have excited sentiments of esteem and admiration. She had taken no part in those fatal schemes of crooked policy, which, by seeking to seize once more that despotic power which the will of a mighty nation had torn from its grasp, lost that limited empire, and that circumscribed dominion of which it might still have held possession. But whatever were the errors of Louis XVI. or the vices of Marie Antoinette, no blame was by any party imputed to the princess Elizabeth. She had neither shared in the intrigues or the licentiousness of the court. All that was known of her in prosperity was her virtuous manners, and her charitable disposition; and in adversity, her unshaken friendship for her brother, and her piety and resignation to God. She had suffered not only the most severe extremes of calamity, but all those indignities, wants, and hardships, which could give misfortune a keener edge; for, during the tyranny of Robespierre, the forms of decency which had till then been observed were altogether disregarded. She, who had been used to the long train of attendants of the most splendid court of Europe, was compelled to perform the most menial offices herself; to dress her scanty meal, and to sweep the floor of her prison. In such circumstances, with no ray of hope to cheer the gloomy towers where she was immured, except that hope which was fixed on a better state of existence—she probably looked upon death as her most soothing refuge, and therefore met it with tranquillity and firmness. I shall transcribe her examination at the revolutionary tribunal, not only as a proof of the calmness and dignity with which she answered the interrogatories of her barbarous judges, but also as a specimen of the manner in which the trials at this sanguinary court

were conducted even before the period arrived when all enquiry, all form was laid aside.

Trial of Madame ELIZABETH, as published at the Time by the Tribunal.

President to the Princess Elizabeth. Where were you on the 12th, 13th, 14th of July, 1789? had you any knowledge of those conspiracies?

Elizabeth. I was with my family. I had no knowledge of any of those conspiracies of which you speak, and the events which then took place; I was far from either foreseeing or seconding.

Court. When the tyrant your brother fled to Varennes, did you not accompany him?

Elizabeth. Every consideration led me to follow my brother; and I made it a duty then, as I should have done on any other occasion.

Court. Did you not appear at the infamous and scandalous orgies of the body-guard; and did you not walk round the table with Marie Antoinette, to induce each of the guests to repeat the horrid oath which they had sworn to exterminate every patriot, in order to stifle liberty in its birth, and re-establish the tottering throne?

Elizabeth. Such orgies I believe never took place; but I declare that I was in no manner whatever informed of their having happened, and never had any concern in them.

Court. You do not speak truth; and your denial can be of no use to you, when it is contradicted on one side by public notoriety, and on the other by the likelihood which there must be in every sensible man's opinion, that a woman so intimately connected as you were with Marie Antoinette, both by the ties of blood and those of the strictest friend-

ship, could not but be a sharer in her machinations, and favoured them to the utmost of her power. You were therefore necessarily in league with the wife of the tyrant; you provoked the abominable oath taken by the satellites of the court, to exterminate and annihilate liberty in its birth; you have likewise provoked those bloody outrages done to the precious sign of liberty, the three-coloured cockade, in causing your accomplices to tread it under foot.

Elizabeth. I have already said that all these things were foreign to my character. I have no other answer to give.

Court. Where were you on the 10th August, 1792?

Elizabeth. I was at the palace, my usual and natural residence for some time past.

Court. Did not you pass the night from the 9th to the 10th of August in your brother's chamber; and did you not hold secret conferences with him, which explained to you the end or motives of all the movements and preparations which were making before your eyes?

Elizabeth. I passed the whole night which you mention with my brother; I never left him; he had a great deal of confidence in me; nevertheless I remarked nothing, which indicated any thing of what afterwards passed.

Court. Your answer is both untrue and improbable; and a woman, like you, who has shewn during the whole course of the revolution so marked an opposition to the new order of things, cannot be believed, when she would wish to make us think that she was ignorant of the causes of the meetings of every sort which took place near the palace on the eve of the 10th of August.—Will you tell us what

hindered you from going to bed on the night of the 9th of August?

Elizabeth. I did not go to rest, because the constituted authorities came to inform my brother of the agitation and ferment which prevailed among the inhabitants of Paris, and of the danger which might probably result from it.

Court. It is in vain for you to dissemble, especially after the different confessions of Capet's wife, who asserted that you had attended the orgies of the body-guard, that you had supported her amidst her fears and apprehensions on the 10th of August, for the interests and the life of Capet. But what you will not be able to deny is the active part which you took in the action that happened between the patriots, and the satellites of tyranny. It was your zeal and your eagerness to serve the enemies of the people, which made you provide them with bullets, which you took pains yourself to chew, as they were to be fired against patriots, and destined to mow them down. It is the prayers which it is well known you made, that your brother's partisans should be victorious, and encouragements of every kind which you gave to the assassins of the country: what do you say to all this?

Elizabeth. All these things which are imputed to me, are so many indignities which I am far from ever having sullied myself by committing.

Court. Previously to the shameful flight of the tyrant to Varennes, did you not take away the diamonds of the crown, and did you not send them to Artois?

Elizabeth. These diamonds were not sent to d'Artois; I only placed them in the hands of a confidential person.

Court. Will you inform us with whom you placed these diamonds?

Elizabeth. Mons. de Choiseul is the person with whom I chose to make this deposit.

Court. What are become of these diamonds which you entrusted to Mons. de Choiseul?

Elizabeth. I am altogether ignorant what is become of them, not having had an opportunity of seeing M. de Choiseul, I have not concerned or troubled myself about them.

Court. You are imposing on us in every answer you give, and especially with respect to the diamonds; for a procès-verbal taken on the 12th of December 1792, by representatives of the people, who knew what they were about in the affair of the diamonds, states in an undeniable manner that these diamonds were sent to d'Artois. Have you had any correspondence with your brother, the *citoyen* Monsieur?

Elizabeth. I do not recollect to have had any, especially since such correspondence was prohibited.

Court. Were you not yourself anxious in dressing the wounds of the assassins sent to the Champs Elysées by your brother against the brave Marseillais?

Elizabeth. I never knew that my brother had sent assassins against any one whatever. If I have ever chanced to assist in dressing the wounded, it was humanity only that could have influenced me: it was not necessary for me to be informed what was the cause of their misfortunes to hesitate whether I should afford them relief; and if I make no merit of this, I do not imagine that you can impute it to me as a crime.

Court. It is difficult to reconcile these sentiments of humanity to which you pretend, with that barbarous joy which you discovered, when you saw streams of blood flowing on the 10th of August. Every thing leads us to believe that you were hu-

mane only towards the assassins of the people, and that you have all the savageness of the most blood-thirsty beasts towards the defenders of liberty. So far were you from giving any assistance to the last, that you provoked the massacre by your applauses : so far were you from disarming the murderers of the people, that you lavished on them handfulls of instruments of death, by means of which you flattered yourself, you and your accomplices, with the re-establishment of despotism and tyranny. Here is the humanity of the rulers of nations, who have at all times sacrificed mankind to their caprice, their ambition, or their avarice.

The prisoner Elizabeth, whose defence consists in denying every charge brought against her, will she be honest enough to agree that she has fed little Capet with hopes of succeeding to his father's throne, and that by these means she has provoked to royalty?

Elizabeth. I have conversed familiarly with that unfortunate child, who is dear to me on more than one account; and I gave him all those consolations which appeared to me likely to reconcile him to the loss of those who had given him birth.

Court. This is saying in other words, that you fed little Capet with those projects of vengeance which you and yours have never ceased forming against liberty, and that you flattered yourself with building up again the wrecks of a broken throne by deluging it with the blood of the patriots."— Here the trial ended, no witnesses were called, and the prisoner was condemned without farther examination.

Madame Elizabeth betrayed some emotion at the sight of the guillotine; but she recovered herself immediately, and waited calmly at the foot of the scaffold, till twenty-five persons who perished

with her were put to death, her former rank being still sufficiently remembered to give her a title to pre-eminence in punishment.

Sometimes amidst these horrors, the most ludicrous violations of the laws of nations took place; and we might have smiled at the absurdities of our tyrants, if they had been mingled with less atrocity. The revolutionary committee of Certe, in the department of Herault, with a noble defiance of all ordinary forms and observances, thought fit to put in requisition not only some mules belonging to the consul of a northern court, and a cart which was his property, but the consul himself to be their driver. The requisition was signed by William Tell, Brutus, Marat, Cato, and Cesar. Whether the consul was of opinion, that such great names were not to be trifled with, or whether he thought that driving mules was a safer occupation than contending with tigers, is uncertain; but it is well known that he submitted himself with passive obedience to this sans-culotte edict, till the 9th of Thermidor; after which period he sent to Paris to complain of the indignity he had suffered, and demanded the chastisement of William Tell and his colleagues.

LETTER XII.

IT would require the pencil of a master to trace in all its dark colouring that picture of calamity and horror which Paris presented at this period. A deep and silent gloom pervaded that city, where

heretofore every heart bounded with gaiety, and every eye sparkled with delight. The citizens in general saw with stupefied terror those processions of death which daily encumbered the streets, and the feelings of sympathy and indignation were repelled by the sense of that personal danger from which no individual was secure. Even in his own habitation, and in the bosom of his family, no man dared to utter a complaint but in anxious whispers, lest a servant should over-hear the forbidden expostulations of humanity, and denounce him as a counter-revolutionist. Many persons wearied of spectacles of horror put an end to their existence; and some who desired to die, but shrunk from giving themselves the stroke of death, took measures to be sent before the revolutionary tribunal, where they knew assassins were ever ready. The usual means employed for this purpose was the cry of "Vive le roi!" words which many young women who had lost their parents or their lovers on the scaffold repeated in the phrensy of despair, and found them, as they wished, a passport to the tomb. Well might the people of France have exclaimed in the words of our divine poet,

"Alas poor country, almost afraid to know itself! It cannot be called our mother, but our grave, where nothing, but who knows nothing, is once seen to smile; where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air are made, not marked where violent sorrow seems a modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell is there scarce asked for whom: and good men's lives expire before the flowers in their caps, dying or ere they sicken."——MACBETH.

The beginning of the month of Prairial, a man of the name of Admiral formed the design of assassinating Robespierre and Collot d'Herbois: he failed in the attempt, was seized, and sent to the Con-

ciergerie. A few days after Amée Cecile Renaud, a girl of nineteen years of age, whose sensibility it appears was singularly affected by the scenes which were passing before her, and whose imagination perhaps was somewhat disordered by those terrible impressions, had the courage, while an armed nation bowed before its assassins, to enter alone and unarmed the monster's den, and, as it would seem, with the intention, at the expence of life, to point out to her countrymen the tyrant under whom they groaned. Cecile Renaud went one morning to Robespierre's house, and enquired if he was at home. She was answered in the negative; and being asked what she wanted, replied that she came to see what sort of thing was a tyrant. Upon this declaration she was instantly led to the committee of general safety, and went through a long examination. She again declared with the same simplicity, that she had only gone because she wanted to see a tyrant; and upon being searched, no offensive weapon was found upon her, and all that was contained in a little bundle which she held under her arm was a change of linen, with which she said she had provided herself, knowing she should want it in prison. The conduct of this heroic young woman furnished the tyrants with an opportunity of murder too favourable to be neglected. They instantly proclaimed that a vast plan of conspiracy against the lives of those renowned patriots Collot d'Herbois and Robespierre had been formed by traitors within the prisons, and traitors without.

The father, mother and aunt of Cecile Renaud were led with herself to the Conciergerie, where she was again interrogated, and threatened that her whole family should perish with her, if she did not confess her intention of assassinating Robespierre. She repeated what she had said at the committee; and added, that they might put her to death if they

thought proper, but, if she deserved to die, it was not for any intention to assassinate, but for her anti-republican sentiments. Cecile Renaud, who was very young and handsome, was dressed with some care, and perhaps coquetry. Her appearance led her savage judges to invent a new species of question in order to bring her to confession. By their directions she was stripped of her own clothes, and covered with squalid and disgusting rags, in which condition she was made to appear in the council-chamber and undergo a new interrogatory, where the same menaces were repeated, and where she answered as she had done before; and with great spirit rallied her judges upon the absurdity of trying to shake her purpose by a mode of punishment so contemptible. Notwithstanding no proof of any intention to assassinate Robespierre could be brought against her, she together with her whole family was put to death. Her two brothers, who were fighting the battles of the republic on the frontiers, were ordered to be conducted to Paris, that they might share her fate; but the tyrants were too impatient for blood to wait their arrival, and owing to this circumstance they escaped.

With Cecile Renaud perished not only her own family, but sixty-nine persons were brought from different parts and different prisons of Paris, who had never seen or heard of each other till they met at the Conciergerie, and were together dragged before the tribunal, and declared guilty of one common conspiracy. Their trial only lasted a sufficient length of time to call over their names; none of them were permitted to make any defence; the jury declared themselves satisfied in their souls and consciences; and the devoted victims, covered with the red cloaks worn by assassins on their way to execution, were led to death. Among those who

rished on this occasion were madame Sainte Amaranthe, her daughter, who had married Monsieur Sartine the son of the ex-minister, and who was now only in her nineteenth year, and one of the most beautiful women in France, and her brother, who was but seventeen years of age. A friend of mine was confined in the same prison with this family. A servant from the outside of the walls had made madame Sainte Amaranthe understand by signs that her son-in-law, who had been confined in another prison, had perished, and that she herself was in danger. She went immediately to her daughter, and said to her, "Your husband is no more, and it is very probable that we shall follow him to-morrow to the scaffold—No tears—this is no time for softness—we must prepare to meet with courage a fate that is inevitable." The next day passed, and no summons to the Conciergerie arrived; but on the night following at eleven o'clock a huissier entered madame Sainte Amaranthe's chamber, and told her she was wanted below. The call was well understood. "And are not we too wanted?" cried her son and daughter. "Certainly," answered the huissier. They both flew to their mother, threw their arms round her neck, and exclaimed, "We shall die together!" The next day they perished. Fouquier Tainville, the public accuser, that monster, "horribly trick'd with blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, bak'd and impasted with the parching streets," placed himself at a window of the Conciergerie close to the gate through which the prisoners passed, in order to ascend the carts which were to carry them to execution. There he feasted his atrocious soul with the sight of sixty-nine victims, covered with assassins' cloaks; and observing among them some young women, particularly the lovely madame Sartine, walking towards the

vehicles of death with that firmness which belongs to innocence; "How bold those women look!" cried Fouquier, enraged at their calmness; I must go and see if they shew the same effrontery on the scaffold, even if I should lose my dinner!"

Robespierre had now attained nearly the summit of his hopes; and his ignorance being equal to his vanity, he did not perceive that the few steps he had to climb before he could grasp at absolute dominion, must be trodden with cautious prudence; since he had advanced so far, that, if he was now compelled to descend, it could only be by a descent which would lead to death. He had destroyed his most powerful rival Danton; but his spies and emissaries, and above all his guilty conscience, told him that more of his colleagues must fall to give him perfect safety. He read in the countenances of the deputies, in the silent gloom with which his edicts were sanctioned, that new storms gathered over his head; and he prepared in conjunction with Couthon, the means of putting the lives of all those who opposed him more absolutely in his power. In the mean time he thought fit to amuse the people by a festival in honour of the Supreme Being, whose existence he had lately proclaimed, and whose name he had dared to utter with his unhallowed lips. The plan of the festival was arranged by the celebrated painter David; he, whose mind the cultivation of the finer arts has had no power to soften; who, not satisfied with displaying on canvass those scenes of sanguinary guilt which from the horrors they excite furnish fit subjects for the pencil, has contributed to give them in his bleeding country "a local habitation and a name;" who, instead of cherishing that sacred flame of enlightened liberty which is connected with the sublimer powers of the imagination, was the lacquey of the tyrant

Robespierre, and the friend of the man of blood, Marat; who, ambitious of recorded disgrace, of immortal ignominy, debased the noblest gift of heaven, genius, and employed his degraded pencil in tracing the hideous features of the monster Marat, while a groaning people were compelled to bow the knee before the image he had set up; and who, at the tribune of the national convention, insulted all common sense and decency by a comparison which, from its audacious absurdity, excites as much ridicule as indignation. "Cato, Aristides, Socrates, Timoleon, Fabricius, and Phocion," exclaims the panegyrist David, "ye whose venerable lives I admire, I have not lived with you—but I have known Marat!" (blessed compensation!) "I have admired him like you, and posterity will do him justice!" Yes, David, repose with your idol upon the civic crowns, the palms and laurels won by revolutionary measures, and doubt not that posterity will do am-justice both to you and Marat. Posterity will indeed be spared the task of overthrowing his altars, since they are already in the dust; and while the offences of many of our vulgar tyrants will be forgotten with their ignoble names, David's shame will be as durable as his celebrity.

While I am upon the subject of Marat and his friend, I cannot help observing that nothing appears more strange to us in this country than the opinions which are formed in England of the public characters of France, not by the enemies but by the friends of the French revolution. That Brissot, Guadet, Vergniaud should receive no incense of applause from those who perhaps lament that the king's castle of the Bastille was overthrown, is natural; but when we hear Mr. Sheridan speak in the house of commons of the *faction of the Gironde*, and when we read in Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's an-

swer to Mr. Paine's pamphlet his remark upon the *Brissotine faction*, we are filled with astonishment. They might with as much propriety talk of the faction of Sidney, of Russel, and of Hampden. Such observations are blasphemies indeed from the lovers of liberty; they who ought to pronounce with veneration the names of those illustrious martyrs, who, after the most honourable struggles for their country, shed their blood upon the scaffold in its cause, with heroism worthy of the proudest days of Greece or Rome. But though the iron sceptre of revolutionary government has restrained the groans, the lamentations, of a mourning nation for the fall of its best defenders; and though the slavish pen of the *Moniteur*, from which Europe received French intelligence, applauded the assassins of liberty; though Brissot, it was asserted, had filled his coffers with English gold, while his widow was languishing with an infant at her breast, with no other nourishment than bread and water, in one of the dungeons of Robespierre, and at this moment exists with three children "steeped in poverty to the very lips;" yet with becoming pride disdaining to solicit support, till the memory of her husband has received, as it shortly will do, some mark of public atonement and public honour; history will do justice to his character—history will judge between Brissot and Robespierre, between the Gironde and the Mountain. History will not confound those sanguinary and ambitious men who passed along the revolutionary horizon like baneful meteors, spreading destruction in their course, with those whose talents formed a radiant constellation in the zone of freedom, and diffused benignant beams over the hemisphere till extinguished by storms and darkness.

Perhaps it will not be displeasing to you to read the following sketch of Brissot, traced by Madame Roland, who was intimately acquainted with him, and who was so admirable a judge of character.

“ Brissot came to visit us : I know nothing more pleasant than the first interview of those who, though connected by correspondence, have never seen each other. We look with earnestness to see if the features of the face bear any resemblance to the physiognomy of the soul, and if the figure of the person confirms the opinion which we have formed of the mind.

“ The simplicity of Brissot's manners, his frankness, his natural negligence, seemed to me in perfect harmony with the austerity of his principles : but I found in him a sort of lightness of mind and character which was not very consistent with the seriousness of a philosopher. This disposition always gave me uneasiness, and his enemies always took advantage of it. The more I became acquainted with him, the greater was my esteem. It is impossible for any one to unite a more perfect disinterestedness to a more ardent zeal for the public service, or feel with so perfect a forgetfulness of his own interest a greater desire of doing good. But his writings are more fitted than his person to effect it, because they have all the authority which reason, justice and knowledge give to literary works, while his figure, from its want of dignity, inspires no respect. He is the best of human beings ; a good husband, a tender father, a faithful friend, a virtuous citizen. His conversation is as mild as his character is easy. Confident even to imprudence, gay and sprightly as a youth of fifteen, he was formed to live with the wise, and to be the dupe of the wicked. As a well-informed politician, and studying during his whole life the disse-

rent relations of society, and the means of procuring the greatest quantity of happiness for the human race, he was well acquainted with the nature of man, and altogether ignorant of the characters of men. He knew that vice existed, but he never could believe him to be a vicious man who spoke to him with an open countenance; and when he discovered such persons he treated them as fools whom he ought to pity, without taking any precautions against them. He could not hate: his mind, though very susceptible, had not solidity enough for so vigorous a sentiment. His knowledge was so extensive, that all literary labour was to him extremely easy: and he composed a treatise with the same facility as another would copy a song: an experienced eye therefore will discern in his works, together with an excellent fund of information, the hasty touches of a rapid and sometimes a slight mind. His activity, his good humour, never refusing to join in any thing which he thought useful, have given him the air of meddling in every thing; and have subjected him to animadversions as an intriguer by those who were eager to find fault. A curious kind of intriguer indeed! a man who never thought of himself, or even the interest of his friends; who is as incapable as he is averse to look after his own concerns; who is no more ashamed of poverty than he is afraid of death, considering both as the usual reward of public virtues.

"I have seen him consecrating the whole of his time to the revolution, without any other motives than wishing to see the triumph of truth, and concurring in the establishment of the public good; working diligently at his journal, which he might easily have made a good object of speculation, but contenting himself with the moderate share allowed him by his partner. His wife as modest as himself,

with much prudence and great strength of mind, formed a more severe judgment of things. She had, since their marriage, continually turned her eyes towards the united states of America, as the place most suited to their taste, and their manners, and where it was easy to live with a very small income.

"Brissot had made a voyage thither, and they were on the point of their departure when the revolution fixed him in France. As he was born at Chartres, and was the school-fellow of Pethion, who is a native of the same city, Brissot formed a still stronger attachment to him in the constituent assembly, where his knowledge and his labour were of essential service to his friend. He brought us acquainted with him, as well as with many other deputies whom former acquaintance or conformity of opinion and zeal for the public good frequently called together to converse on the subject. It was even agreed that they should assemble four hours a week in the evening at my house, because I was always at home, had good apartments, and was so conveniently situated that it was not far from any of those who composed our little circle."

I cannot resist adding to this sketch the copy of a letter addressed by Brissot to Barrere, the day after the latter, from the tribune of the convention, had promised to satiate the people with Brissot's blood.

J. P. BRISSOT to BARRERE, *Deputy of the Convention.*

Abbey prison, 7th of September, 2d year of the Republic, one and indivisible.

"THE people ask you for bread, and you have promised them my blood! You thus sentence me to death before I appear at the tribunal. Thus you

insult the people in supposing them to have a taste for blood, and the tribunals, which you conclude are the instruments of your passions! Alas, if my blood could furnish abundance and extinguish all divisions, I would shed it myself in an instant. In order to excuse this sanguinary phraseology, you pretend that I am forming conspiracies in prison; you pretend that I have declared, that before my head fell, many in the convention would fall.

"This is a new calumny, invented to irritate the minds of the people against me. I defy you to cite a single witness, a single proof of this conspiracy and of this assertion. I abhor blood: I would not even demand that of my prosecutors, who would willingly drink up mine. Philosophy, justice, good order, and humanity, are the true foundations of a republic. It is well known, my only crime is that I have opposed all other means of establishing it. This is the conspiracy which I still continue to practise in my prison. Yes, I am in conspiracy with my triple bars, and my triple bolts. I am in conspiracy alone, or with the philosophers of antiquity who teach me how to support my misfortunes, for the sake of liberty, of which I have ever been an apostle. This is the plot which shall be added to the list of those already imputed to me, and of which you seek in vain the evidence, since it is all imaginary. But you wish for victims! Strike then, and may I be the last republican sacrificed to the spirit of party!"

But let us leave the martyrs of liberty, and return to the polluted festival instituted by a tyrant. David, ever ready to fulfil the mandates of his master Robespierre, steps forth, marshals the procession, and, like the herald in Othello, "orders every man to put himself into triumph."

At this spot, by David's command, the mothers are to embrace their daughters—at that, the fathers are to clasp their sons—here, the old are to bless the young, and there, the young are to kneel to the old—upon this boulevard the people are to sing—upon that, they must dance—at noon they must listen in silence, and at sun-set they must rend the air with acclamations.

Ah, what was then become of those civic festivals which hailed the first glories of the revolution ! What was become of that sublime federation of an assembled nation which had nobly shaken off its ignominious fetters, and exulted in its new-born freedom ! What was become of those moments when no emotions were pre-ordained, no feelings measured out, no acclamations decreed ; but when every bosom beat high with admiration, when every heart throbbed with enthusiastic transport, when every eye melted into tears, and the vault of heaven resounded the bursts of unpremeditated applause !

But let us not even now despair of the cause of liberty. Let us not abandon a fair and noble region filled with objects which excite the thrill of tenderness or the glow of admiration, because along the path which France has chosen serpents have lurked beneath the buds of roses, and beasts of prey have issued from the lofty woods : let us discover, if we can, a less tremendous road, but let us not renounce the land of promise.

The citizens of Paris had been invited, and the invitation amounted to a command, to decorate their houses in honour of the festival. Accordingly Paris on that morning, lighted up by brilliant sunshine, presented the most gay and charming spectacle imaginable. Woods had been robbed of their shade, and gardens to the extent of some leagues rifled of their sweets, in order to adorn the city.

The walls of every house were covered with luxuriant wreaths of oak and laurel, blended with flowers; civic crowns were interwoven with national ribbands; three-coloured flags waved over every portal; and the whole was arranged with that light and airy grace which belongs to Parisian fancy. The women wore garlands of fresh-blown roses in their hair, and held branches of palm or laurel in their hands: the men placed oaken boughs in their hats, and children strewed the way with violets and myrtle. The representatives of the people had large three-coloured plumes in their hats, national scarfs thrown across their shoulders, and nosegays of blended wheat-ears, fruits, and flowers in their hands, as symbols of their mission.

From this profusion of gay objects, which in happier moments would have excited delightful sensations, the drooping soul now turned distasteful. The scent of carnage seemed mingled with these lavish sweets; the glowing festoons appeared tinged with blood; and in the back ground of this festive scenery the guillotine arose before the disturbed imagination. I thought of that passage in Mr. Burke's book, "In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every vista I see the gallows!" Ah Liberty! best friend of mankind, why have sanguinary monsters profaned thy name, and fulfilled this gloomy prediction!—

A great amphitheatre was raised in the garden of the Thuilleries immediately before the palace, now the seat of the convention. Upon a tribune in the centre of the theatre, Robespierre as president of the convention appeared; and having for a few hours disencumbered the square of the revolution of the guillotine, this high-priest of Molock, within view of that very spot where his daily sacrifice of

human victims was offered up, covered with their blood, invoked the Parent of universal nature, talked of the charms of virtue, and breathed the hope of immortality. When the foul fiend had finished this impious mockery, he descended from the tribune, and walked with great solemnity towards a grotesque kind of monument that was raised upon the basin in the front of the palace, which had been covered over for that purpose. On this monument was placed a misshapen and hideous figure, with ass's ears, which for some hours served as an enigma to the gazing crowd, who knew not how to account for this singular appearance; till Robespierre having set fire to this image of deformity, which was declared to be the symbol of atheism, its cumbrous drapery suddenly vanished, and a fair and majestic form was discovered, emblematical of wisdom and philosophy.

Atheism being thus happily destroyed, the convention, attended by a numerous procession of people, and preceded by triumphal cars and banners, marched to the Champ de Mars, where with much toil and cost a rocky mountain had been reared, upon whose lofty summit the tyrant and his attendants climbed, and from whence he once more harangued the people; and the festival closed with hymns and choral songs in honour of the Supreme Being.

Robespierre on this day, intoxicated with his power, lost sight of his usual prudence, and displayed all the littleness of his vanity. He caused a line of separation to be made between himself and the other deputies of the convention, and marched at some distance before them, like a captain at the head of his band. He had the folly to display his importance by keeping the convention and the assembled multitude waiting, and the ceremony suspended for two hours, while he was sought for in

vain. During the procession his creatures attempted to raise the cry of "Vive Robespierre!" but it was faintly re-echoed by the spectators, many of whom followed him with "curses, not loud but deep, which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not."

Two days after this festival in honour of the Supreme being, Robespierre, the scourge of his creatures, compelled the enslaved convention to pass a law, which permitted the revolutionary jury to condemn those who were brought before them, from their own internal conviction, without any proof whatever, or hearing any witnesses; and which also suppressed the superfluous office of official defender, or counsel; a privilege that Couthon, who made the report in the name of the committee of public safety, asserted conspirators by no means deserved*. In other words, the jury were now authorised to pass sentence without even the forms of a trial. From this period, till the fall of Robespierre, all the judicial solemnities of the revolutionary tribunal consisted in reading over the names of the accused, who were immediately after declared by the jury to be guilty of a conspiracy against the safety of the French people, and the indivisibility of the French republic.

If any of the unhappy persons thus proscribed attempted to speak in their defence, they were thus silenced by the president: "Tu n'a pas la parole †" and if they persisted in declaring their innocence,

* Amidst the definitions of aristocracy, when the law passed against suspected people, Couthon ingeniously observed, that any good citizen was authorised to arrest every man in the street as an aristocrate, who held his head too much up or too much down, and also all those who looked on one side, instead of looking you in the face.

† "It is not your turn to speak."

they were put what was called "hors de débats;" that is, ordered immediately out of the court, condemned in their absence, and sent to execution. "I was not in prison when this conspiracy took place," cried the viscountess de Noailles, madame de la Fayette's sister. "But you would have been in the conspiracy if you *had* been there," answered the president; and this unfortunate lady, the mother of three children, perished with her own mother and grandmother. Madame de la Fayette being in another prison was, in the hurry of forming the lists of death, forgotten when her family suffered—and still lives. From this period the prisons became the scenes of unexampled horror and despair. Till now, the crowds by which they were inhabited had submitted to their fate with that cheerful resignation, and often with that careless gaiety which is buoyant at a Frenchman's heart in circumstances that would altogether overwhelm the sinking spirits of the people of other countries. The houses allotted for the prisons of the suspected persons were for the most part hotels of emigrants, which were placed in the most agreeable situations of Paris, with extensive gardens, and commanding beautiful views of the country. Such habitations had nothing of that gloom and darkness which we usually associate with the idea of a prison, and they were peopled with the best society of Paris.

The ladies were attentive to the duties of the toilette, the gentlemen were polite and assiduous, and the court-yard of the Luxembourg, the convent of St. Lazare, and some other prisons, exhibited of an evening almost as much brilliancy and gaiety as the Thuilleries or the Champs Elisées. Music and literature had their amateurs. At the Luxembourg, select circles were formed to hear lectures from men of letters, sometimes on chemis-

try, sometimes on astronomy. At St. Lazare, ladies sent invitations to dinner from the corridor of Frimaire to the corridor of Floreal, with the same formalities as formerly from their respective hotels. Sometimes cards, sometimes bout-rimés, charades, and epigrams beguiled the evening of its length, and thus the days of captivity rolled on*. They were indeed embittered by one hour of mournful melancholy, and one of trembling terror: the first when the evening paper arrived, and the list of the victims of the revolutionary tribunal was read over, among whom the prisoners seldom failed to find some friend or acquaintance to lament. But this was a sensation of gentle sadness, compared to that turbulent dismay excited by the hoarse voice of the turnkey sounding at midnight through the long galleries the knell of some devoted victim, who was called upon to rise, in order to be led to the Conciergerie by gendarmes sent for that purpose from the revolutionary tribunal. Still, however, amidst the tears which the prisoners shed over their lost companions, many of them cherished the fond hope that they themselves should escape. But the law of the 22d of Prairial tore away every illusion of the imagination or the heart, and displayed the general proscription of the prisoners in all its extent of horror. It was no longer a solitary individual who was called to death; multitudes were summoned at once. Every returning night, long covered carts drawn by four horses entered successively the court-yards of the different prisons.

* The maisons d'arrêt were now so multiplied that almost every street of Paris had its prison, and in some of the smaller hotels the revolutionary laws were less rigorously observed than in those which contained a great number of prisoners. Instead of giving a sketch myself of one of these milder abodes of captivity, I shall translate a letter written to me on that subject by M. Maron, the protestant minister at Paris.

Whenever the trampling of the horses' feet was heard, the prisoners prepared themselves for their doom. The names of the victims marked for execution the following day were called over, and they were instantly hurried into these gloomy hearths. The husband was scarcely allowed time to bid his wife a last farewell, or the mother to recommend her orphan children to the compassion of such of the prisoners as might survive the general calamity. At the prison of the Luxembourg, an hundred and sixty-nine victims were in one night torn from their beds, and led to the grated dungeons of the Conciergerie, that prison over the gates of which might with equal propriety have been written, the same as over that of the infernal region of Dante, "** Lasciate speranza voi ch'entrate;*" for here it might literally be said, "hope never came, that comes to all." I have seen the Conciergerie; that abode of horror, that anti-chamber of the tomb. I have seen those infectious cells, where the prisoners breathed contagion, where the walls are in some places stained with the blood of the massacres of September, and where a part of the spacious court-yard, round which the grated dungeons are built, remains unpaved since that period, when the stones were taken up for the purpose of burying the dead. I have seen the chamber, where the persons condemned by the revolutionary tribunal submitted to the preparatory offices of the executioner; where his scissars cut off the lavish tresses of the youthful beauty, and where he tied her tender hands behind her waist with cords. Merciful Heaven! and among those who have thus suffered were persons to whom my heart was bound by the ties of friendship and affection.—But though I have survived such scenes,

* "Let him lose all hope who enters here."

they have left upon my heart that settled melancholy which never can be dissipated.—For me, the world has lost its illusive colouring; its fairy spells, its light enchantments have vanished; and death, the idea most familiar to my imagination, appears to my wearied spirit the only point of rest.

The usual pretext for those murders *in mass*, which were practised at this period, was that of a conspiracy in the prisons; a vague and wide term which the tyrants might interpret at their pleasure, and which gave them the power of including whatever persons and whatever numbers they thought proper. Spies were placed in every prison, who, after making out their lists of proscription as they were directed by the tyrants, declared that a conspiracy existed, of which those marked on the lists were the authors, or accomplices. Persons who had never seen or heard of each other till that moment, were often brought together from different prisons to take their trial for the same conspiracy; and when the decemvirs wished to get rid of any particular individual, he was without any hesitation added to what was called the *fournée*, the *batch*; for such was the appellation given to the crowds dragged together to the guillotine, and with such terms of jocular familiarity was mourning humanity insulted. Sometimes the persons accused only received their act of accusation as they were led up to the tribunal. Sometimes in the hurry, confusion, and carelessness with which these indictments were made out, one person was mistaken for another. The duchess of Biron, among other instances, went to the tribunal with an act of accusation which was destined for her steward. The indifference of the tribunal with respect to such errors, enabled mons. Loiserolles, at sixty years of age, to deceive his barbarous judges, by dying for his son, a youth in

his twenty-first year. It was observed, that this generous parent, who thus a second time gave life to his child, answered with uncommon alacrity when his name was called upon, and went with a look of exultation to the scaffold. Perhaps history does not offer a more affecting instance of parental tenderness, making the voluntary sacrifice of life to save the object of its affection. But this extraordinary epocha called forth the lights and shades of the human character in all their strongest colouring. The last excesses of ferocious crimes were contrasted by the sublime enthusiasm of the virtuous affections, shedding their sweetness like solitary flowers over the wilderness where serpents hiss, and beasts of the forest howl; and by the noblest efforts of heroical philanthropy bidding us cease to despair of humanity, and converting the throb of indignant horror into the glow of sympathetic admiration;—bidding us turn from the tribunal of blood, from Robespierre and his jury of assassins, to Loiserolles dying for his child; to madame Berenger, led in the bloom of life to execution with her parents, and, altogether forgetful of herself, seeking only to support the sinking spirits of her mother;—to madame Bousquet, the sister-in-law of Gaudet, scorning the impious laws which punished humanity with death, affording shelter to her proscribed friends, and dying with them on the scaffold for having done so.

Among the multitudes who perished at this period, all were not armed with the same fortitude; and sometimes even when tyranny spared the life of its victim, its cruel persecutions bereaved the sufferer of reason. Of this mademoiselle ——— was a melancholy instance. This unfortunate young lady saw her father, her mother, and several of her relations dragged to the scaffold: she alone

was spared, and remained a prisoner at the Conciergerie. Along the gloomy vaults of that terrific prison, by the dim light of sickly lamps, she fancied she saw the mangled spectres of her murdered parents, and in a short time became entirely bereft of reason. She obstinately refused all sustenance, and remained motionless as a statue, holding to her bosom her parrot, whom she had insisted on bringing with her to her dungeon. When conjured by the other prisoners to take some nourishment, she only answered, “ * Je n’ai besoin de rien.” “ But your parrot,” said they, “ your poor parrot is hungry.” “ Non,” she constantly replied, “ non, il n’a besoin de rien—Mon paroquet est comme moi—il n’a besoin de rien.” The tyrant has fallen, and the dungeon of this unfortunate young lady is thrown open—but alas! for her, redress and freedom have come too late—her reason is gone for ever!

The Polish princess Lubomirska united with superior talents all the charms of early youth and distinguished beauty. She had been travelling through different countries of Europe, and two years since was compelled to leave Berne in Switzerland, on account of the attachment she had avowed to the cause of the French revolution. She came with her husband to Paris, and cultivated the society and friendship of Vergniaud and of other deputies of the convention, who were the most eminent for their talents and their zeal for liberty. This democratic princess, to whom a true republican would have offered a *civic* crown, became an object of resentment to the vindictive Robespierre, on account of her friendship for some members of

* “ I want nothing.—No, he wants nothing.—My parrot is like me, he wants nothing.”

the Gironde: she was thrown into prison, from thence sent to the revolutionary tribunal, and condemned by the jury of assassins to die. Being in a state of pregnancy, her execution was deferred. In the mean time her friends gave information of her danger to Kosciusko, the Polish general, and desired his interposition in her behalf. Kosciusko instantly dispatched a letter to Robespierre, declaring that the princess Lubomirska had ever shewn the most devoted attachment to the principles of liberty, and conjuring Robespierre to spare the life of a zealous friend to the common cause in which France and Poland were engaged. Robespierre, after reading the letter, exclaimed, “* Quoi! grace pour une princesse!—Ah, Kosciusko!—qu’on la guillotine.” The unhappy princess, having miscarried, was immediately sent to execution.—Two days before the fall of Robespierre, eight women who had been respited having declared themselves pregnant, were dragged to the scaffold. Among this number was the princess of Monaco. As she passed along the court of the prison, she said to the prisoners who were assembled to see the sad procession, and bid a last farewell to the companions of their misfortunes, “I go to death with the calmness which innocence inspires, and wish you from my soul a better fate.” Then addressing herself to one of the turnkeys who was leading her towards the chamber where the executioner waited to bind the victims, “I have one favour to ask you,” said she, taking a packet from her bosom, “will you promise to grant it? This packet contains my hair: I implore your compassion, I conjure you in my own name, in the name of all who hear me, send it to my son, to

* “What! pardon for a princess!—Ah, Kosciusko!—let her be guillotined.”

whom it is directed; swear to me in the presence of those virtuous persons, whom the same destiny as mine awaits, that you will render me this last service which I require of humanity." The dismay and terror of one of her women who was involved in the proscription, formed a striking contrast to the firmness she herself displayed. "Take courage, my dear friend," cried the princess, "take courage, it is the guilty only who ought to fear."—The prison of Port Libre offered an affecting spectacle of filial piety. Madame Lachabeaussiere, in consequence of a malignant denunciation made against her by her son-in-law, was not only dragged to prison, but placed in a dungeon in close confinement till the moment arrived when she was to appear before the tribunal. Her daughter, madame Maleffi, who was already confined in another prison, procured leave to be transferred to that where her mother was immured, whom by tears and supplications she obtained permission to see. Madame Lachabeaussiere was taken out of her dungeon, and led to her daughter, who flew towards her, and, throwing her arms round her neck, remained a long time pressing her mother to her bosom, and without power to articulate a word. After this melancholy interview, madame Lachabeaussiere was led back to her dungeon. Her situation affected her daughter so deeply that she became bereft of her reason. Sometimes she took up her needle-work for a few moments; then throwing it aside, rose with precipitation, and flew along the galleries of the prison till she reached her mother's cell. She usually seated herself at the door, and listened attentively: when she could hear nothing, she used to weep bitterly, and repeat again and again in a tone of despair, "Oh, my mother! Oh, my tender, my unfortunate mother!" She often remained

many hours together, seated upon the stone-floor, and she was in a state of pregnancy. Her hair hung dishevelled over her shoulders, her eye seemed bent on vacancy, her cheeks were sometimes flushed with deep red, and sometimes of a deadly paleness, and she was often seized with convulsive faintings. Every day she carried the greatest portion of her food to her mother, who without this succour would have often wanted sufficient nourishment for her support. It is soothing to add, that madame Lachabeauffiere was snatched from death by the fall of the tyrant, and that her tender and virtuous daughter is restored to reason.

While the tyrants, far from finding any satiety of blood in their daily murders, were erecting new ranges of seats in the hall of the revolutionary tribunal, sufficient to contain an hundred instead of fifty accused persons, death now hovered in a new form over the prisons. The administrators of the police went to each prison attended by a strong guard, and ordered the prisoners to be shut up in their respective chambers, and not suffered to have any communication till the purpose of the visit was effected. They then went successively to every apartment, and demanded of the prisoners their knives, scissars, razors, buckles, watches, and all the money they had in their possession. These unhappy persons, being altogether ignorant of the object of the visit, had no time to conceal any thing, and were stripped of all they had except fifty livres in paper, which each prisoner was suffered to retain in order to pay for his subsistence. But from this day famine scowled along these gloomy mansions, adding to the pangs of mental sufferings those of debility and disease. The prisoners were no longer permitted to receive their daily meals from their own houses, or from a tavern; but were

ordered from henceforth, in conformity to the laws of equality, to eat à la gamelle *. Their food was provided for them at the rate of fifty sous a day, by a cook placed in the prison. Their nourishment consisted of one meal in twenty-four hours, often too scanty to satisfy the calls of hunger, and sometimes composed of such nauseous diet as the greater part of the prisoners were unable to eat.

Age and infirmity were denied every indulgence necessary to support the disordered frame, or raise the sinking spirits. A little bread saved from this wretched meal, and water, was all that could be obtained during the rest of the day †. To this meal the prisoners at the Luxembourg, where nine hundred persons were confined, were summoned in a succession of three hundred at a time, by a great bell, which called them to a hall, at the door of which stood the jailor, who had been an executioner under Collot d'Herbois at Lyons ‡. This man was remarkably tall, big, and muscular; his arms were bare to the elbow; he wore a fierce red cap, which had now become the symbol of blood, and looked as if he were prepared for a massacre. He only suffered twenty persons at a time to enter the hall, and then flinging the door in the faces of the others, obliged them to remain in the passages till

* Out of one dish at a common table.

† Even the prisoners of war were compelled to submit to this rigorous treatment. General O'Hara has since told me, that after having avoided the gamelle for some weeks on the plea of illness, he was at length forced to share the common evil. His friends in England will be glad to hear that he is now released from his lodgings in a prison, and from a gendarme when he walks out, and is gone on his parole to Chantilly.

‡ The keeper of the prison at the time we were in confinement, Benoit, distinguished in Paris by the epithet of the bon Benoit, had long before this period been turned out of office, being unfit to execute the purposes of his masters.

those within were seated at the table. The hour of dinner passed like the other hours of the day, in gloomy and unbroken silence; for even the soothing intercourse of conversation was now forbidden, under the penalty of being dragged immediately before the tribunal, since the spies placed in the prisons, whenever they observed two or three persons talking together, inquired sternly if they were forming a conspiracy. What most occupied the minds of the prisoners at this period was contriving the means of escaping from their tyrants by a voluntary death, which was now become difficult, since they had been stripped of every instrument which could have served that purpose. Such was the situation of these unhappy victims of tyranny, when on the night of the 9th of Thermidor the tocsin sounded, and the city was called to arms. Many circumstances which I shall afterwards relate, led the prisoners to believe that these sounds were the signal of a general massacre. But the tocsin now rung the joyful, the triumphant peal of liberty. Before I give you a detail of the scenes which passed on the 9th of Thermidor, I must trace the political events which led to that memorable epocha, and rescued France from a state which was the astonishment and shame of human nature; from a state more terrible than all which the most cunning tyrant could have inflicted upon slaves whom he had previously disarmed. And all this was suffered by a nation which called itself free, which had taken up arms to assert its freedom, and gained the most glorious victories in its defence. France, covered with all the laurels of heroic valour, and the terror of combined Europe, held out her neck to vulgar assassins and executioners, instead of crumbling them into dust. —Such are the strange contradictions of human na-

ture! The effects resulting from the terrible impulse of revolutionary government upon the moral world, may perhaps be compared to those produced upon the natural scene by the tremendous tempests which sometimes sweep along the western islands; when the mingled elements rush forth in irresistible fury, when the deluging waters bear away vegetation, trees, and rocks, and the shrieking whirlwinds shake the dwellings of man to their foundations.—The storm is past—the enormous vapours have rolled a way—a soft light hovers on the horizon, and we are now left at leisure to sigh over the ruins that surround us, and lament the victims laid prostrate by the blast. But let us hope that this stormy revolution will at least produce some portion of felicity to succeeding generations, who have not, like us, felt the tumultuous horrors of this convulsion of the passions, who will owe their happiness to the struggles of a race that is passed away, and whom they have never known; while we, who have been spectators of the cruel conflict—we, who have lost the friends we loved and honoured, are often unable, amidst the tears we shed over their tombs, to consider “all partial evil as universal good.”

To Miss HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

Paris, 15th Ventose,
3d year of the French Republic.

“VOUS*, qui des bords de la Tamise
Délaisant les brouillards épais,
Au milieu du peuple français
Cherchâtes la terre promise;

* M. Maron, when he addresses me in verse, uses a style of compliment which would have led me to omit the poetry, if it did not belong to the history of the letter. Besides, fiction is the

Vous qui carressâtes long-tems
 Cette illusion délectable,
 Comme s'amusent les enfans
 Des rêves brillans de la fable;

Vous, que les guichets, les verroux
 Ont achevé de mieux instruire;
 Mais qui voyez des jours plus doux
 Enfin à l'horison reluire;

Aimable élève d'Apollon,
 Qui, sur le sommet du Parnasse,
 Près des Pope, et des Addison,
 A déjà fixé votre place.

You ask me, madam, to give you a sketch of the maison d'arrêt, where, under the tyranny of Robespierre, I found myself shut up on a *suspicion* of being *suspected*; and like your countryman Howard, active in your researches, you wish to add my little recital to your history of our revolutionary dungeons. I obey your orders, for

Peut-on rein refuser aux Graces,
 Quand la Vertu, quand la Raison,
 Inséparables de leurs traces,
 Par vos accens, commandent en leur nom ?—

I cannot however promise you any very interesting detail: the hotel Talaru, converted into a maison d'arrêt of the section Lepelletier, has been the scene of no very remarkable events. It never was reckoned in the number of those fatal dépôts which were called the antichambers of the guillotine. But it is probable that it would have had its turn also. There

privilege of poets, and the French language is still that of gallantry, although the days of French chivalry are gone for ever.

is even room to believe that it would not have been long delayed, if the ninth of Thermidor had not, for our good fortune, deranged certain *anthropophagical* measures announced by Barrere in the sitting of the convention previous to that day. But I am anticipating facts; and as I have to write a journal, and not an epic poem, I shall keep within chronological order.

Though my residence in Paris does not exceed twelve years, I have witnessed the building of the hotel Talaru, in the rue Richelieu, now rue de la Loi, near the national library, by the marquis of that name; who was first maître-d'hôtel to the queen. Considerably reduced in his fortune by the new order of things, the citizen Talaru took last year the resolution of leaving his hotel, and of withdrawing into the adjoining house, which also belonged to him, and which was called the little hotel Talaru. He let the great hotel to one Gencé, a tavern-keeper, who intended to make it a furnished hotel. Gencé, on reflection, thought that it was not probable that any considerable number of foreigners would come to Paris under the present circumstances, or that the citizens of the departments would now find Paris a very pleasant abode; and fearful that he had made a bad speculation, he was anxious to rid himself of the affair. We had now reached that disastrous period when maisons d'arrêt sprang up in every quarter; when every section in Paris had its exclusive prisons at the service of its revolutionary committee; and Gencé proposed the hotel Talaru to the revolutionary committee of the section Lepelletier, to be applied to this patriotic purpose. His proposal was accepted, and the agreement made; but I have never learnt what were the conditions. A German

porter was put into this new prison, and the mine became worth the digging.

In reality, all whom their evil destiny led hither were made to pay for their lodging a most exorbitant price. Such was in a short time the fate of Talaru himself. He expressed a wish, on account of his age and infirmities, to have a room to himself; and he obtained this special favour at the rate of 18 livres a day, that is, paying almost as much for his small apartment as he himself was paid for the whole house.

I was the eighth person who was lodged in a beautiful saloon on the ground floor towards the garden. We each paid four livres a day. This saloon therefore brought in three hundred livres a decade, nine hundred and sixty livres a month, ten thousand two hundred and fifty livres a year; and the whole hotel was let by the proprietor for seven thousand livres. What became of this exorbitant rent, and among whom were the spoils divided, as I have never been in the secret, I can give no information on that head.

On the 10th of Thermidor we were about two hundred prisoners.

If any person complained of these extortions, he was answered, "Citizen, you are at liberty to leave this place, and if you like you may be transferred elsewhere." But the fear of being thrown into some one of those houses which were premature graves, made us bear with resignation the ills we had.

It was on the 19th of Prairial that I exchanged my own modest apartment for the fine saloon in question. The order of the committee of public safety by which I was arrested, did not express in what prison I should be confined. I asked therefore the agent of the committee, who was the bearer of

the warrant, conjointly with two members of the revolutionary committee of my own section, if I might be allowed to choose my prison? He answered courteously, that he did not wish for any thing more than to oblige me.

De m'obliger! l'aimable politesse!

Je demandai le *Luxembourg*.

Il me fut fait ce refus net et court:

Citoyen, je ne peux, car on s'y trouve en presse.

Les *Carmes*, citoyens?—Hélas! c'est même cas.

Picpus? C'est incor pis, ainsi qu'à *Saint Lazare*.

Enfin, pour sortir d'embarras,

Je pensai demander d'aller droit au Ténare.

Happily things did not proceed to this extremity. I referred myself to the knowledge and kind offices of my courteous agent, and he carried me to the hotel Talaru. I found on my entrance an order of things altogether different from what I had expected. I thought that all the maisons d'arrêt were at this period equally guarded, and treated with the same rigour, and prepared myself for solitary confinement and the *gamelle*. But I found the communication among the prisoners perfectly free: they visited each other without any impediment, and even the communication without was attended with very little difficulty. I saw some receive their wives and children, others their friends and mistresses. Persons of both sexes met together; every one amused himself as he thought proper, and fared as he liked. If it was not the image of *liberty*, it was at least that of *equality* and *fraternity*; and I said to myself, "Well! if we must build our tabernacles here, so let it be!" How many persons whom I knew were much more to be pitied than myself! The art of contentment is to look not at what is better, but what is worse than our own situation.

Here then, for the third time since the institution of the republic, was I deprived de la cléf des champs; "of the key of the fields."—I have perhaps more merit than many others in loving the republic, which has cost me more personal vexations than I had ever dreamt of suffering.

The very day of its proclamation (21st September 1792, O. S.) I was arrested at Seves, for twenty-four hours, from having met the municipality and the military force of the place, at the house of one of my friends whom they were come to take to prison, and who was then gone to Paris to confound the calumny of his persecutors before the committee of general safety. The first anniversary of this same day, twenty fusileers took me from my bed at five in the morning, and I was lodged in the horrible chambre d'arrêt of the mayoralty-house*. But I must own that this last time the prospect was a little more alarming on account of the progress of tyranny, which since the establishment of revolutionary government stalked on with giant steps, and knew no bounds. I acknowledge at the same time to have felt that the perspective of evil, when it is clothed with a certain degree of probability, is often worse than the evil itself.

The daily spectacle of the misery of so many good men whom I esteemed or loved; the image which was ever before my mind of those honourable veterans in patriotism whose heads had been placed under the fatal axe; the audacious insolence of the wicked in every popular assembly, which was equal-

* We were shewed up in that place to the number of one hundred and two. This room was much more dreadful before an honest Swiss, Louis Major, established a kind of corporation under the name of *the society of perfect equality*. This regulation made the dwelling more supportable; I had the honour of being president twice twenty-four hours.

led only by their folly, and by the abject stupor of the people of the higher classes, whose name was now become a title of proscription*, embittered my existence more than the rigours of imprisonment; tempered, I allow, by a great number of un hoped-for comforts, and by a stoical tranquillity of which I did not think myself capable. Society was become to my feelings the Cape of Storms, my prison was the Cape of Good Hope.

My first regrets were bestowed on the festival of the following day; that which was celebrated in

* Had the historian Sallust been a witness of this horrid system, and undertaken to draw sketches of it, he might have found an exact description in a picture he has himself given, to which it bears the most perfect resemblance.

“ In primo capere pessimum quemque et omnibus invium necare: ea populus lætari et merito dicere fieri. Post, ubi paulatim licentia crevit, juxta bonos et malos lubricose interficere; cæteros metu terrere. Ita civitas, servitute oppressa, stultæ lætitiæ graves pœnas dedit—uti quisque domum aut villam, postremò aut vas aut vestimentum alicujus concupiverat, dabat operam ut in proscriptorum numero esset. Homines incertissimi, quorum omnis vis virtusque in lingua sita est, forte atque alterius socordia dominationem oblatam insolentes agitant. Quæ pessimi et stultissimi decreverunt, ea bonis et sapientibus facienda. Mollitia decretorum *senatui* dignitatem, *Lepido* metum detrahi.” Sallust. in Bello Catil. et passim in Fragmentis.

“ They first began by putting to death the nobility and clergy; and as the people felt no sympathy with the aristocracy or the church, they discovered great marks of satisfaction at their proscription. But when the tyranny became by degrees so confirmed that all classes were indiscriminately murdered, and every one shrunk with fear, the city suffered for its silly joy, by oppression and horrors of every kind—so that whoever coveted the house or villa, or even the plate and dresses of any person, used his endeavours to get him put into the list of proscription. Men of doubtful characters, whose whole courage and virtue lay in their tongues, taking advantage of the stupidity or indolence of the rest, assumed absolute power, and behaved themselves with unexampled insolence. Whatever these profligate and weak men decreed, the wise and the good were obliged to sanction; and the convention, terrified into submission by the committee of public safety, lost all its dignity, and sunk into registers of its imperial edicts.”

honour of the Supreme Being. My absence from this national solemnity gave me pain. Notwithstanding all that has been said of the decree of the convention expressing the adhesion of the French nation to the immutable principles of all morality and all worship, I cannot help observing that this decree is one of those proposed by Robespierre which I disapproved the least. Atrocious disturbers of social order, by carrying to their utmost length the most impious abominations, had thrown on republican France a general odium. Justice had overtaken these persons; but the coalesced powers were not less careful to take advantage of this delirium, and discredit the cause of liberty with their own people, by treating as *atheists*, that is to say, as universal *disorganizers*, its partisans and friends. The national representation was willing to give an authentic and formal denial to this calumny; and it is true that in this point of view the decree had a good effect. The convention never entertained the absurd idea of decreeing that God existed, that the soul was immortal, and that the French ought to believe this because such was the good pleasure of the legislature. It meant, by a declaration of a kind as new as the circumstances were in which it was placed, to absolve and exculpate a great nation from those calumnious imputations seized on by its enemies to serve their views; and I repeat it, all the friends of principle have applauded the decree, and I confess that I was enthusiastic in its favour.

It was for its object, and not the mode of celebrating the festival of the 20th of Prairial, that I regretted my absence from it. The mode I had judged before hand would be a series of pantomimes and *harlequinades*; and during a long walk I had taken in the country a few days before, I had la-

mented the devastation made in the woods, and in particular among the young trees around Paris ; a devastation which extended over the whole surface of the republic, and of which our sons as well as ourselves will feel the sad effects.

I composed, two or three days after my arrest, the following couplets, in which I attempted to describe my moral situation, and which I sent to a few friends to comfort them on this point. They are set to the air of the " vaudeville de la Soirée orageuse," which the affecting adieus of Mounjourdin to his wife and his friends have so much contributed to make the fashion.

I.

Si de riches appartemens,
Si le luxe de la dorure,
Des glaces, des tableaux charmens,
Pouvoient adoucir ma clôtüre ;
A mes regrets, à mon ennui
Je devois imposer silence :
Mais envain j'y cherche un appui
Propre à soutenir ma constance.

II.

O précieuse liberté !
Première passion du sage,
De ta paisible volupté
Rien, hélas ! ne nous dedommage.
Nous ne respirons que pour toi,
Ta soif jour et nuit nous tourmente :
En nous soumettant à la loi
Toi seule encore es notre attente !

III.

Dernier asyle du malheur,
Espérance consolatrice,

De ton baume restaurateur
 Prête-moi le secours propice !
 Qu'il tremble, l'ami des tyrans,
 Prêt à leur vendre sa patrie.
 La vertu venge ses enfans
 Des forfaits de la calomnie.

IV.

Oui, par toi je dois triompher
 D'une malveillance perfide !
 Et que pourrois je redouter,
 Vertu ! couvert de ton égide ?
 Quand la paix regne dans mon sein,
 Que mon front en offre l'empreinte !
 Il ne peut être que serein,
 Alors que la cœur est sans crainte.

In this manner I accommodated myself every day more and more to my new dwelling, and every day the good company increased by new arrivals.

But by degrees the police of the house became more severe, and we were successively deprived of little comforts which we much regretted.

First of all the communication with our friends, so far as receiving their visits in our room, entirely ceased. It was soon a particular favour to talk with any one for a few minutes at the door of the prison. Soon after, the entrance of the newspapers was forbidden, and this prohibition was not one of those things which affected us the least. It was common enough, however, to have a newspaper smuggled in, and then it was privately handed about, and sought after with anxious curiosity, for we never failed learning the death of some acquaintance or friend ; but we were informed also of the success of our armies ; and their victories

sometimes compensated for our individual pains and sufferings.

A short time had elapsed, when in the chamber where I lodged we had a precious resource for intelligence. The first secretary of the liquidation office, the citizen Dutilleul, was one of our fellow-prisoners. He was so necessary in his office, that the director-general Denormandie was authorised to put him in requisition every time he stood in need of him, and this happened almost every day. At seven o'clock, Dutilleul was sent for at the maison d'arrêt, and conducted by a gendarme to his office, where he passed the whole day at work; and the grateful republic put him under lock and key every evening. Judge how well he was questioned on his entrance; and it happened pretty often, that *through inadvertence* he had left the "journal of debates and decrees" at the bottom of his pocket. In the meanwhile we killed the present time, and shut our eyes on the future, by play and bodily exercises; such as battledore and shuttlecock, and fives: we feasted, read, and made *bout-rimés*. I frequently partook of the two last amusements with a very amiable young man named R ----- n, and we had a Muse, who daily amused herself in letting up some prize, which my antagonist, I own, generally obtained. Till then we had neither of us had any idea of our talent for poetical composition*.

* I was one day employed in the exercise of a talent of another kind than that of making *bout-rimés*, and which I also acquired in prison, and that was washing the dishes; when the boy who made our beds, being alone at that moment with me, looked at me at first with an embarrassed air, and then stared with astonishment while he asked me half a dozen successive questions. "Pray, sir, are you a protestant?" "Yes." "Did you know any person of Nîmes?" "Yes." "Rabaut St. Etienne?" "Yes." —His eyes glistened—"Are you a minister, sir?" "Yes."

Et voilà du malheur l'utilité palpable !

Il developpe en nous le germe du talent.

Rameau dit de Laborde : " Hélas ! c'est bien le diable :

" Que le fort à ce drôle ait prodigué l'argent !

" Il nous effaçoit tous, si, loin de l'opulence,

" Son génie eût connu l'aiguillon de la faim."

Amis, du bien, du mal, admirons la balance :

Ils concourent ensemble à la meilleure fin.

What made me think in this place of Rameau and Laborde is, that this last, not the rival of Plutus but of Orpheus, was also our companion in misfortune, and that I shall have soon to inform you of his fatal catastrophe. As to our poetical sports, I shall communicate some of them, my dear madam, at the end of this letter. Even the charade, the logogryphe, and the acrostic furnished us with amusement.

L'ennuyeux loisir du couvent

Parmi les moines les fit naître

En dépit du bon goût ; le même sentiment

En prison les fit reparaître.

Thus passed away the long days of Prairial and Messidor ; Thermidor came. Till this time we had been soothed with the consoling idea, that the hotel Talaru was only a dépôt of prisoners detained

" Of the Dutch embassy formerly ?" " Yes " " And now at St. Thomas de Louvre ?" " Yes."—The boy burst into tears—" Good God ! sir, is it possible that it can be you ?—What ! you here ! I can scarcely believe my own eyes"—And then wiping away his tears, he told me who he was, and talked to me of Nîmes, and my respectable friend Paul Rabaut, and his unfortunate brother Rabaut St. Etienne. " No, no, sir," added he, " you shall wash no more dishes ; I will take care of that, and I beg your pardon for not having known you sooner." I thanked the good lad, and informed my companions of his offers. He rendered each of us the same service, which was worth fifteen livres to him a decade ; and I was afterwards indebted to him for many little acts of kindness.

as a measure of general safety, and not of those who were termed suspected; and that there was little apprehension of any thing more than captivity. The fourth of this month robbed us of this assurance. Three of our companions were taken from us the preceding evening; Talaru, the proprietor of the house; Boutin, former treasurer of the navy, known by his beautiful English garden, which he called Tivoli*; and Laborde, formerly valet-de-chambre to Lewis XV. celebrated for his passionate taste for the arts, and in particular for that of music, in which he had been a great composer, and of which he had also written the history. The day after their removal was the last of their existence; and their heads fell with forty-three others under the pretended axe of the law.

An event of this nature darkened a little the colour of our ideas, from the sad presage which it offered, especially to prisoners of a certain *caste*.

Quand de l'être au néant le passage est si bref,
On se tâte par fois si le trône tient au chef.

Fallen from the hopes which the greater part of my fellow-prisoners had indulged of a speedy release, their gaiety and good humour were changed into looks of melancholy and sorrow. They were astonished and sometimes impatient at my unshaken

* The *French Virgil* has consecrated these verses to him:

“ Tel que ce frais bouton,
Timide avant-coureur de la belle saison,
L'aimable Tivoli, d'une forme nouvelle
Fit le premier en France entrevoir le modele.”

DE LILLE, Poeme des Jardins, ch. 1.

He celebrates, two verses afterwards, the garden of the *Desert*, which had been laid out with so much taste by another of our companions in misfortune at the hotel Talaru, M. Demonville.

philosophy. The house now overflowed with wagon-loads of prisoners, who were brought up from the departments: the guard became more strict, and the rigours and pains of our captivity more severe. About this time I composed two couplets to the tune of the Marseillois hymn:

I.

Chers camarades d'infortune,
Compagnons de captivité,
De notre disgrâce commune
Consolons-nous par l'amitié:
De tous les revers de la vie
Elle tempère la rigueur,
Le bon droit vengera l'honneur
Des efforts de la calomnie.

Courage, ô mes amis! bravons les coups du sort!
Vertu! (bis) c'est avec toi qu'on méprise la mort.

II

Retranché dans sa conscience,
Le républicain généreux
Doit bientôt de son innocence
Voir briller le jour radieux.
Equitable moins que sévère,
La patrie, au gré des tyrans,
Auroit-elle pour ses enfans
Cessé de vouloir être mère?

Courage, ô mes amis! bravons les coups du sort!

Vertu! (bis) c'est avec toi qu'on méprise la mort.

I had no doubt but that this system of blood was drawing near its end *; but who was sure of living

* I thought with Sallust: "Ego cuncta imperia crudelia magis acerba quam diuturna arbitror, neque quemquam a maleis metuendum esse, quin ad eum ex multis formido recedam." *Frugm.*

to see it? None of us dared believe that it was so near. The eighth of Thermidor no paper could pass the portal, and Dutilleul had not been sent for to his office. He went however the ninth. How long he seemed to us in returning! He came at last; but his return was accompanied by circumstances that appeared extraordinary. The keeper, holding him by the arm, hurried him across the court, where we were walking, and waiting to see him; and led him up to his room, without permitting him to stop. When we joined him, we found his lips completely closed with respect to what was passing, to which effect he had received express orders. We were all shut up two hours sooner than usual, and enjoined to go to bed. But one of us, who had gone down into the court-yard for a moment between nine and ten o'clock, heard a *newsman cry distinctly in the streets, "La grande arrestation de Catiline-Robespierre et de ses complices!" He told us of this circumstance; and you may well imagine what an effect such a piece of information produced on our minds. We knew at least to what we ought to attribute the beat to arms, and the retreat which we heard some time after. We slept but little, and the next morning early we were informed of the whole. All then was ecstacy: the countenances of the prisoners

"The reign of violence is more cruel than lasting; and no one becomes an object of terror to the multitude, without feeling that the multitude is an object of terror to himself."

* For some days past the news-men had been enjoined not to cry their papers near the hotel. This man had been ordered by the sentinel to march on, and hold his tongue. He answered, swearing a great oath, "There are a number of unfortunate persons within; and they ought to know what is passing." I was informed of this precious anecdote the next day.

† The wonderful arrest of Catiline-Robespierre and his accomplices!"

were scarcely to be recognised. As my dejection had not been very great, my joy on this happy occasion was less immoderate. The same day I made this impromptu epitaph on Robespierre :

Ci-git un monstre abreuvé de forfaits ;
Tigre altéré de sang tyrant, fuant le crime :
Caligula, Neron, Phalaris traits pour traits.
La foudre, hélas ! trop tard l'a plongé dans l'abîme.

On the 10th and the 11th, prisoners of a pretty opposite description made their appearance.

On the 12th I was set at liberty. I was the first in the house who was thus indebted to the change of system, and one of those who least expected it *. I did not want much entreaty to go out ; and I vi-

* On the examination of my papers, which was done by two members of the revolutionary committee of my section, without myself being present, or any one on my behalf ; a letter was found, I was told, from the *mother of God* † : I was of course her accomplice, and it was expected I should be tried with her. The very day after the fall of Robespierre, *Vadier*, that veteran in virtue, brought to the recollection of the public this vast conspiracy, and informed the convention that he had a report ready, which would unfold all its mysterious horrors. I said to myself, " So many innocent people perished as accomplices of L'Amiral, why should I not perish as the accomplice of Catherine Theos ? " What comforted me was the absurdity of this accusation, to which none of my friends ; nor any person who had the least acquaintance with me, could give credit. It seemed curious enough to ascend the fatal cart, and get to the next world with the votaries of the sybil of the rue Contrescarpe.

† Catherine Theos was a fanatic who indulged in all the airy and fanciful dreams of Swedenborg, and, like other fanatics, had a certain number of followers. This poor woman was arrested as a counter-revolutionist, the tyrants of the day calling every thing they did not comprehend, counter-revolutionary. She had the address to flatter Robespierre ; probably gave him some claim to relationship ; and Robespierre protected her secretly from the fangs of *Vadier*, who was very earnest in making war on those citizens of Heaven, and bringing them to the guillotine.

sited my penates, my friends, and my books, with a pleasure which the experience only of the unfortunate can estimate. Before I finish my history, I should do justice to the keepers, to whose care I was entrusted for fifty-three days. They were not equally praise-worthy, but, taking one with the other, they were not much amiss; and the agreeable aspect of a bottle of wine or an assignat humanised them completely.

I shall characterise Smydth by a single trait. While the greater part of the jailors were followed by ferocious mastiffs, his usual companion was a sheep [a sheep with four legs*] which never quitted him, and which made him look more like St. John than St. Roch.

Ainsi de mes arrêts se termine l'histoire :
O siècles à venir, daignerez-vous y croire !

P. S. A singular anecdote I cannot help relating. Rouffelin, one of my fellow-prisoners at the hotel Talaru, had been carried before the revolutionary tribunal, and acquitted. He came the next day to visit his old companions, and impart to us the good news. He informed me on this occasion, that a Dutchman called Van Hooft had been dragged to the guillotine at the moment when he (Rouffelin) entered the Conciergerie, and that he lay down on the bed yet warm of this unfortunate man, who had just left it. Van Hooft was my friend; and his unhappy catastrophe affected me extremely. I was

* Every person in Paris knows who the *two-legged sheep* were, and their abominable employment in the prisons under the tyranny of Robespierre. Very different from the

—placidum pecus, inque tuendos
Natum homines.

so much the more strongly persuaded of the death of Van Hooff, as it was announced in several of the public papers: and you may imagine without much difficulty what was my astonishment, when a fortnight or three weeks after, I received a letter from Van Hooff, in which he congratulated me on the justice which had been done me, and begged me to use my interest to procure him his liberty. I hastened to the prison of Pleffis to see him, where he had been just transferred. He cleared up the mystery of his resurrection, by informing me that the cannibals had guillotined, from a mistake in the name, a poor Brabanter, who was called Van Hove, instead of himself. Not having had it in his power to repair this error till it was too late, he had taken advantage of it, and acted the dead man till farther orders.

LETTER XIII.

THE surrender of Lyons, which took place some days previous to the murder of the deputies of the Gironde, contributed to hasten the execution of that atrocious deed. The Lyonnais had long struggled against the commissaries of the mountain faction, who, under the pretence of an ardent zeal for liberty, were diligent in seeking opportunities for riot and plunder; and however strongly this detachment of conspirators were supported by those who directed their motions from Paris, they could not withstand the indignation and vengeance of the citizens of Lyons, who, roused by the dangers with which

they were threatened, crushed their oppressors, the chief of whom, Chalier, they sent to the scaffold. The Lyonnais had proceeded too far to hope for any mercy from the faction, who had now accomplished their treason at Paris : and seeing the cause of liberty abandoned by the departments, who had made their peace with the traitors, they were driven either to suffer patiently the weight of their wrath, or prepare to oppose it. Of this dreadful alternative they chose the latter ; but finding themselves unsupported in the project they had at first formed of marching to Paris, they determined to defend their own city. In the mean time they employed the most honourable means to explain to the convention, that their resistance arose neither from disaffection to the republic, nor from any wish to form a federal government, of which they had been accused ; that they had sworn fidelity to the republican constitution, and had issued orders to assemble the primary assemblies for its acceptance. But resistance for any cause was now a crime, and this concession of the Lyonnais only served to increase the insolence of their oppressors, who decreed that the city was in a state of rebellion, and that all who had resorted thither from the neighbouring departments should be treated as emigrants : for the conspirators easily perceived that this city might form a central point of opposition, by collecting together all those persons in the southern provinces who were averse to the revolutionary order of things. An army was immediately levied, and ordered to march against Lyons ; and it was believed that when the Lyonnais were informed that the affair was about to become so serious, they would make no farther opposition.

The general who commanded the conventional army, endeavoured by proclamations to conciliate

the parties, but in vain. His proposals of pardon were rejected by those who thought themselves injured, and who knew by fatal experience what degree of confidence was to be placed in the offer of tender mercies from the cruel. The Lyonnais were allowed three hours to deliberate on the gracious propositions of the general, but a discharge of cannon returned their answer before the first had expired; and though new proclamations were issued, and on the anniversary of the 10th of August both parties sent deputations to celebrate that event together, the Lyonnais continued their warlike opposition, and prepared to make an obstinate resistance.

In the mean time the department of Mont-Blanc, formerly Savoy, was recovered by the Piedmontese, who took advantage of the absence of the army which had been called off for the purpose of reducing Lyons; and the representatives who conducted the operations of the siege wrote to the convention to repeal the decree which the conspirators in their wrath had poured out against that city. The Lyonnais were as deaf to these concessions as they had been to the proclamations of the generals, who now proceeded to extremities, and began the bombardment of the city, which was set on fire in several places, and a great number of the inhabitants perished. Other proclamations followed this act of hostility, which met with the same reception. The black flag continued floating on the towers, indicating resistance till death; and though the city, being unfortified, had nothing to defend it but the bravery of its inhabitants, no impression could be made except by bombardment. The conspirators therefore sent their emissaries into the adjoining departments to raise the people *in mass*; and, if any credit is to be given to the reports of those who were employed, the besieging army was re-inforc-

ed by other armies amounting to fifty thousand men. With this re-inforcement the attack began afresh, the city was surrounded, all communication cut off, and the convention was informed that famine would soon effect what the obstinacy of the Lyonnais had hitherto prevented. During three months these brave republicans contended against the numerous armies that the conspirators had assembled; and had not their ardor been checked by their commanders, they would all have witnessed against the cowardice and baseness of their countrymen, by whom they were left unsupported, with the last drop of their blood. After having performed prodigies of valour, till they were overpowered by numbers, and resistance became no longer possible, they endeavoured to effect their retreat, by forcing their way through the besiegers; for according to the dispatches sent to the convention they were entirely surrounded. In this retreat some succeeded; but a great part were cut to pieces, and the conventional army entered the city in triumph.

With the savage joy of the famished cannibal, when he seizes on some ship-wrecked wretch whom the waves have unkindly spared from the fate of his companions, the mountain conspirators heard of the reduction of Lyons. The committee of public safety, through the organ of Barrere, in congratulating the convention on the news, informed them that measures were taken to exterminate every fugitive; that no weakness, no mercy should be shewn; and that this den of conspirators must make ample reparation, and that this reparation must consist in burying this rebel city under its own ruins. And lest this moment of wrath should be transient, lest the indignation which had filled their capacious souls should evaporate, these guardians of the public weal methodized their vengeance by a decree,

which the convention sanctioned, that Lyons should be razed to the ground, and struck out of the cities of the republic. This "great and vigorous measure, the total destruction of the city, was the only one that had escaped us," the deputies in mission at this devoted place echo to their colleagues of the committee. They had already created military tribunals to judge the inhabitants; but complete extermination had not been within the reach of their comprehension: and lest this example of vengeance should be lost to the world by some misplaced hesitation, by some sentiment of weak humanity, the committee dispatched one of its own members to direct and superintend the execution.

What had hitherto passed was scarcely the beginning of horrors. Collot d'Herbois, a comedian, who had been driven from the stage for his professional incapacity, but who had acted a considerable part in the conspiracy, was gone thither to give tragedy some original strokes. "Alas," says the eloquent reporter on the correspondence of Robespierre and the extent of his enormities, "the terrible instrument of death, erected only for the punishment of crimes, springs up like poisonous plants over every part of the republic. It becomes naturalised under the opposite skies of the north and the south: the frozen bear and the devouring dog-star alike mourn over its fatal successes.

"O! come; let us penetrate together, my fellow-citizens, across those fiery torrents, under those ruined walls which seem crumbling down to threaten us with ruin; let us pass into those cities heretofore filled with people, now widowed of their inhabitants; into those new deserts more frightful than those of Paran or Horeb. See them, like the hyena growling fiercely over its prey!—Do you not perceive them like destroying demons rushing

with their devouring torches over every monument of genius or of art? These new Gengis, who have conquered neither Persia, nor Egypt, nor Lybia, are anxious to make Frenchmen of the 18th century a race of barbarians, reduced not to the practice, but to the simple reading of the rights of man, as the Saracens were heretofore instructed in the knowledge of the Koran.

“ Look for a moment with us, on these vile dilapidations of the treasures of Ptolemy Philadelphus; observe those evil principles, those Arimanes, who have been disputing with each other for twelve months past the palpitating limbs of our dismembered country! What were they, and what are they now, those founders of committees of demolition, those creators of ruins?—Vile slaves, trembling in the presence of the mighty.

“ It is the conspiracy of folly and of crimes united against genius and virtue. It is the insurrection of robbery against the precept of *mine* and *thine*. It is the reign of private vengeance and the most abject passions.

“ O Lyons! city celebrated for thy commerce, who is this new Gengis*, who, with the axe and the thunder in his hand, pours down on thy walls, and rushes on to avenge the injuries of Themugin? It is finished, and thy ruin is sworn!”

It is unnecessary to ask of the unfortunate inhabitants, as I have sometimes done, the history of their woes—their tyrants blazon themselves their crimes to the open day, and invite you to read the black catalogue of their enormities. “ In destroy-

* Gengis, unknown and despised under the name of Themugin, returned as a conqueror to avenge the insults which he had received. Collot, who knew professionally the parts which the Tartar had played, is accused of having taken him for a model, and of having avenged, like him, private injuries.

ing a rebel city," says Collot, "we shall consolidate the rest. We must leave nothing but ashes. We demolish with cannon balls, and with explosions like those of mines." When such were his principles, his projects, and his exploits, it would be trifling to stop to talk of individual distresses—to relate how he ordered three ladies, who had thrown themselves at his feet to implore his mercy, to be tied for six hours to the scaffold where their husbands were to be executed; or to speak of the execution of a young heroine, who had shewn prodigies of valour during the siege. These were only interludes in this great tragedy, one of whose languishing actors in his existing correspondence writes, that since the guillotine has been at work, his health has been established; that every thing goes well, and is expected to go better; "since it is found," continues he, "that the guillotine is not sufficiently expeditious, and in a few days three or four hundred will be dispatched at a time; and the houses are fast demolishing."

This was no empty menace—the tragedian executed what this savage had promised.—"The guillotine and fusillade do not go amiss," says he; "sixty, eighty, two hundred at once are shot, and every day care is taken to arrest a sufficient number, so as not to leave the prisons empty." But still these were ordinary means. This new Salomoneus was not contented with the insignia of the god, he panted to imitate his destroying power; and accordingly some of the miserable inhabitants were placed before batteries of cannon; and while they were shattered and torn in pieces by the artillery, though the greater part were left to be dispatched the following day by the spades of those who came to bury them, Collot amused himself in beholding the operation.

During this waste of life, that of the property of the unfortunate victims was not more respected. "It costs four hundred thousand livres each decade for *demolitions*," writes one of these demons, who talks of re-colonizing the country. "More heads every day, more heads are falling. What ecstasies thou wouldst have felt," adds the monster to his correspondent, "if thou hadst seen this national justice executed on two hundred and nine rascals! What cement for the republic! We have knocked off five hundred; and when we have dispatched twice as many, which we shall do, things will go forward."

Where then, it might be asked, was the convention, while these horrors were executing? Where? Alas! this convention, sent by a free people to consolidate their liberty, was in chains. Had it been less enslaved, the decree, that Lyons should no longer exist, would have justified the executioners. —Collot was not willing that this decree of devastation should remain a figure of rhetoric—he says so: "The revolutionary army arrives the day after to morrow, and then," continues he, "I shall be able to perform great things. These conspirators must soon be dispatched—Lyons must exist no longer—and the inscription thou hast proposed," for this letter is addressed to Robespierre, "contains a great truth, for hitherto the decree has been but an *hypothesis*. It will be your business to make it what it ought to be, and we will prepare the amendments before hand."

This was the private correspondence of the monster with Robespierre. But let us not conceal his language to the convention itself. "We are hardened," says he, "against the tears of repentance—Indulgence is a dangerous weakness—The demolitions are too slow—We must employ means

more adapted to republican impatience. The explosion of the mine, the devouring activity of the flame alone can express the omnipotence of the people: its will cannot be impeded like that of tyrants; it ought to have the effect of thunder." And what answer does the convention return to its colleague?—The wretch for a whole year after retained a seat in the assembly.—It was the plan of Collot to banish those whom he did not destroy; for he found it difficult to carry his purpose into full execution; and after having murdered a part, and exiled the rest, he discovered that he had fulfilled his commission, and should be able on his return to say with truth, that Lyons existed no longer.

"What ideas! what fury!" exclaims the reporter: "it seems as if the moral world was fallen back into chaos. And these are legislators! Alas! if the Erebus of the antients had had its legislation also, it would undoubtedly have been more consistent and more humane."

We are at first tempted to believe, in passing in review these ferocious characters, that all the monsters of the desert had quitted their dens to rush in on our cities; or rather, to adopt more natural ideas, we cannot help discovering the end of these horrible levellers, which was the destruction of commerce, and the establishment not of an equality of happiness, but of an equality of misery, throughout the republic.

It will scarcely be thought possible, yet it is very generally believed, that Collot was led to this vengeance on the people of Lyons for having hissed him when he acted on their stage. Thousands of victims have atoned for the insult offered to a wretched comedian; and this great city, which from the time of Augustus had been the centre of the commerce of Gaul, where he lavished his favours,

and for three ages received the tribute of gratitude in the honours that were rendered him, had now fallen under the stroke of the most vulgar of tyrants. Had these monsters looked for precedents for their cruelties, they might have found them in their prototype Caligula, for in this very city that tyrant once resided: and the resemblance of Caligula and Collot is so far striking, that they both exercised their despotism over the same class of citizens; though the motives of Caligula appear to have been more natural than those of Collot, and his cruelty more discriminate.

While this tragic ruffian was acting his part at Lyons, others with principles as atrocious, though they were less steeped in blood, were carrying desolation into other parts of France. Bourdeaux, which had been raising itself to the height of the revolution, was now a prey to the caprice of a young monster who had not yet counted twenty years, and who was the valet of Robespierre in the commission of crimes. The republican patriots having long since fallen under the proscription, Julien's instructions and plan seem to have been the establishment of *sanculottism* over the aristocracies of commerce, of *muscadinism*, and of wealth. His correspondence is as silly as it is atrocious, and of its atrocity we may judge when he condemns the measures of blood already taken as being moderate and almost counter-revolutionary. It appears that he was one of the first who had denounced the enormities of Carrier; but ages of punishment or repentance will not atone for the murder of Salles and Guadet, who were executed at Bourdeaux during Julien's administration, together with Guadet's father, mother, sister and her husband, the husband's brother, and one of his aunts; in short, the whole family, excepting Guadet's wife, whose

murder was delayed till she recovered from a severe indisposition, which happily lasted till the tyrants fell.

LETTER XVI.

NO class of men were more interested in the preservation of the abuses of the ancient government than the priests. When the constituent assembly lessened the influence of the higher clergy, by stripping the church of its domains, and making the salaries of its ministers more equal, the national wealth was not only increased, but the great mass of the priest-hood were satisfied with the distribution. The majority of those who had hitherto directed the machine of the revolution were fully persuaded that the priesthood shared but little in its spirit; and, knowing that whatever does not keep pace with its career, retards its progress, had sought at different times to dissolve the alliance of the church and state altogether. They felt indeed that the article in the declaration of rights, which says "that no one shall be disturbed in his religious opinions," must be eventually subversive of the established religion; since whoever believed it to be not only unnecessary and expensive, but hostile to the great principles of liberty, would murmur at contributing to its support.

A considerable part of the clergy refused to accede to the civil constitution which the constituent assembly had formed, alleging that in matters of religion, or in the regulations of the church, no one ought to guide their faith, or receive their obedience, but the personage who, in constant succes-

sion from the great author of christianity, had held the delegated power. This class had by their non-conformity lost their employment, but they were not the less cherished on that account by those who thought with themselves, that man was made for the sabbath, and not the sabbath for man. The zeal of these non-jurors for the faith which they contended was once delivered to the saints, was too ardent to suffer this humiliation of the church in silence; nor was the vigilance of the friends of the revolution less awake to counteract their efforts. The majesty of the church, of which they believed themselves to be the only true supporters, would not permit them to bow before the majesty of the people; and when the legislative assembly undertook to be the interpreters of the law, and enacted decrees for the banishment of the unconstitutional clergy, they sought refuge in the majesty of the throne, the cherished ally hitherto of the church, whose power was at this time scarcely more confirmed than its own.

The protection given by the court to the non-juring clergy hastened the ruin of both*. The king refused at first to sanction the decree of the legislative assembly, who however at length prevailed: and when the royal power was annihilated, which happened not long after, the priests were compelled to seek asylums of charity in foreign countries, of those whose ancestors had fled from the bloody persecutions of their order, but whose injuries the sons had forgotten; or if still remem-

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* Of the secret history of that eventful period which overthrew both the monarchy and the church in France, madame Roland has left us many curious particulars. The principal actors are now no more, except Servan and Dumourier—all the rest having perished on the scaffold. See Appendix, No. VI.

bered, they perhaps answered as Guise did to Poltrot, "If your religion enjoins you to murder, ours compels us to forgive."

The disposition of the national convention was still more unfavourable than that of the legislative assembly to the civil establishment of the clergy. The truth is, that the enlightened part of the country had considered religion as a personal thing. Those who believed, of which the number was not very great, thought the protection of the state no addition to its dignity; and those who disbelieved, or, which was the same, confounded the doctrines of christianity and the established church, thought that its alliance was not only burdensome, but pernicious. The great divisions of the contending parties for the government gave the priesthood respite. But no sooner was this question decided, and the reign of Robespierre established, than the men of reason, as they called themselves, renewed the attack against the men of the church, who were unable to make any farther resistance.

The constitutional clergy had no protection but that which was given them by the constitution now proscribed, and had inspired no interest in the devotees, who considered them rather as apostates from religion, than defenders of the faith; and treacherous guides in the road of salvation, on account of their compliance with the law.

A strict adherence to the ceremonies and doctrines of the Romish church was not the only superstition that darkened France. There was another of a more terrible nature, and more destructive of social order, which was atheism. Voltaire has observed, that a reasoning atheist is a greater scourge to mankind, than the most sanguinary fanatic. The commune of Paris had assumed this character; and, having twice contributed to overturn the civil go-

vernment of the country in the space of a few months, imagined that the kingdom of the next world was to be taken by force as well as the kingdom of the present. This formidable project was conceived, and brought to maturity in modest silence. The good people of Paris, who had troubled themselves but little about religion, but who imagined that there might be something good in it, as there is in the worst of vocations, were extremely surprised to see the archbishop of Paris, with his clergy, present themselves at the bar of the convention, attended by the constituted powers of the department and the municipality, "to be regenerated;" that is, to abjure their former belief, and make their new confession of faith, in which they declared that there was no other duty than liberty, no other gospel than the republican constitution, and no other worship than equality. This illumination was not the result of the deep studies either of the archbishop or his vicars. The secret was imparted to him by Chamette, the procureur of the commune, to whom it was discovered by one Cloodt, commonly called Anacharsis, a Prussian by birth, and an atheist by profession, whose history I have already related. Cloodt had written a book, which he told the convention on presenting it was the fruit of fifteen hours labour every day during the course of four years. He also instructed them, that this work, singular in its method and curious in its detail, overturned at one stroke all sects, antient or modern, of natural or revealed religion.—Of this work, which "proved the nothingness of all religion," the convention decreed the acceptance, and honourable mention; and, thus armed, Anacharsis set out on his travels to convert the world to atheism. There was something masterly in his first

attempt; and had he been satisfied with the conversion of the archbishop and the commune, whom he brought to the bar of the convention, he might have enjoyed his triumph in security; but when he attempted to proselyte the convention itself, Robespierre opposed the invader with his doctrine of the Supreme Being, and Anacharsis was sent to the prison of the Luxembourg. There a friend of mine found him in daily controversy with Thomas Paine, who had just written "The Age of Reason," for his credulity in still indulging so many religious and political prejudices. Soon after, this vain enthusiast was sent by his polemic antagonist Robespierre to the guillotine, where many of his converts in succession followed him, and among his pupils was the archbishop.

Many of the bishops and priests who were deputies in the assembly, and some of the ministers of the protestant faith, animated by the example of the archbishop, made their public recantation. Of this last sect one observed that, though his system of faith inculcated, more than any other, moral obligations, yet, as the great day of judgment was arrived, the reign of reason, the triumph of philosophy, he must divest himself of his sacerdotal character, and become regenerated also, since, as he confessed, "*tous les prêtres dans tous les cultes ont toujours un peu de charlatanisme* *."

The ingenuouſness in the members of one profession provoked the same candour in those of another. The priests having confessed that there was a little quackery in their administration of the next world, the physicians crowded to the bar of the commune, to acknowledge that they had been "un

* All priests of all religions have a little spice of the mountebank.

peu prêtres" also, and that a little spice of mountebank dealing entered into their administration of this. Admitting that nature and reason were the best remedies, they made offerings of their diplomas by which they had been authorised to cure *secundum artem*, in direct contradiction to both; and this virtuous dereliction of their former practice was rewarded with applauses and civic insertion.

Reformation, as well as terror, was the order of the day: the searching eye of the commune left nothing unexplored. To the epuration of the priests and physicians, succeeded that of the comedians, who had no professional sins to confess, since they had acted their parts on the stage of the world without any disguise. However, the commune thought that those who had been in the habitude of personating princes, and nobles, and queens, and countesses, could little relish habits of equality, and therefore sent to prison both actors and actresses as suspected.

The spirit of reform did not stop at the consecration of the spoils of the church to the services of the state. It seized on those privileges which in all countries, and under every establishment of religion, have been accorded with the common consent of mankind, and on the exercise of which much of the order and happiness of the world has been thought to depend. On our entrance into the world it is the priest who confers on us our moral existence; in riper days it is he who hallows our affections; and without his dismissal we have been taught to think that our road to heaven was not altogether secure. Of the two first of these functions, the legislative assembly had taken possession—the fathers brought their children to be regenerated at the municipal font, and the lover led his blushing mistress before the altar of Hymen, and received

her from the hand of the civil officer, who pronounced their union "in the name of the law."

The care of disposing of the citizens at death yet remained to the church, and the funerals continued to darken the way in long processions, till the commune seized on this last prerogative of the clergy, and decreed, that gay revolutionary colours of the nation should take place of the funeral pall—the priests should be changed into municipal officers, and the cemetery should be called the place of repose, where, instead of the hope of being troubled with a resurrection, the citizens should have the privilege of sleeping for ever.

The church of Notre Dame was changed into the temple of Reason; and the commune, with the divinity herself, attended by a splendid train, came to request the convention to sanctify with their presence the consecration. The Goddess of Reason was a fine blooming damsel of the opera-house, and acted her part in this comedy also to the entire satisfaction of her new votaries. From her imperial throne, in which she was borne by four porters, she descended to the right hand of the president of the convention, and by a decree received the fraternal kiss, as soon as the procureur of the commune, who attended as high priest, or master of the ceremonies, had announced her negative and positive character; "first, that she was not, like the objects of the ancient worship, a cold and inanimate image; and next, that she was a masterpiece of nature; and that her sacred form had so enflamed every heart, that only one universal cry was heard, "No more priests, and no other gods!"

When the deputies arrived at the temple, the Goddess of Reason introduced them to the Goddess of Liberty, who came out of the house of Philosophy, to receive their homage, and bestow

her benediction. The enemies of the revolution encouraged these follies, which the patriot disavowed and lamented: and the philosopher would only have smiled at these transient puerilities, had they not been mixed with atrocity and crimes. Alas! the respect for Reason was as fleeting as the respect for other strange gods; for her altars were soon deserted, and her high priests, and the divinity herself, were soon after conducted amidst the applauses of the people to the guillotine. Immediately after the regeneration of the metropolis, those who felt the same conviction of its necessity made confession of their sins, and applied for the conventional blessing. This conviction nevertheless was far from being general in either profession; for though the constitutional clergy were attached to the cause of liberty, and rejoiced in the regeneration of their country, they did not imagine that the belief of reward in a future state would make a less virtuous citizen of the present. This counter-revolutionary obstinacy was held in great indignation. Though the commune had called on Reason, like the priests of Baal, "from morning until noon," the votaries at her shrine were few and solitary, and it became necessary for the honour of the goddess, that more revolutionary measures should be pursued. Accordingly, attended by the committees of the sections, and the popular societies of Paris, the municipality appeared a second time at the bar of the convention, where, after a philippic against the unrecanting clergy, they demanded the suppression of their salaries, and that those who believed in "the tales of augurs should pay them." The convention, who probably had as little faith in augurs as the commune, had however more charity, and deferred the sentence of famine, which the municipality had decreed. The

commune, though it did not succeed in the attack on the priesthood, was more successful in its attacks on the church. The word of order was issued, and the streets of Paris were filled with mock religious processions. The most ludicrous masquerades presented themselves in every quarter; pioneers and artillery-men led the march, clothed in the surplices of the inferior clergy; the national guard were arrayed in the habits of the priests; the revolutionary citizens of the section were vested in garments still more costly; the revolutionary ladies and the priestesses of Reason had sanctified themselves with the dresses belonging to the Virgin, and St. Frances and St. Bridget; and the revolutionary committee had reserved for their own decoration, with great prudence, all the garments of fine gold, embroidery and jewels, while the caps of the priests and the mitres were placed on the heads of the horses employed in dragging these weighty spoils, which were to be presented to the convention. These offerings consisted of crosses, suns, vases, chandeliers, and chases, apostles and saints in gold and silver, St. Anthony and his pig, St. Roche and his dog, and all the other saints registered in the calendar who were found to be of the same metallic worth. From the convention, after undergoing the sentence of condemnation for aristocratical and counter-revolutionary principles, they were sent to be regenerated at the mint, and make expiation for the long series of impositions they had been practising on the world, by becoming, under a new form, the protectors of liberty and the republic.

The wooden saints, who in moral and religious estimation were equal, and oftentimes superior, in paradisaical rank to their brethren, though their consideration in these moments of irreligious phrensy

was infinitely less, were committed, without remorse, to the flames at the place of execution. And into the same unhallowed fire were thrown those inestimable treasures which had been for ages the consolation of the suffering believer, and the refuge of the faithful and pious. Amid the sacrilegious pile lay three eyes of the evangelists; a blue jacket, bedaubed with paint, taken from the wardrobe of St. Luke; a piece of ragged tent cloth, that had been purchased from the warehouse of St. Paul, and his cloak, which had been left with Carpus; a few of the coats and garments of St. Dorcas, which the weeping widows had shewn to St. Peter; all which, with other relics still more precious, such as some of the moveables belonging to the holy Virgin, with parts of her apparel; the spoon and pap-dish of the holy child; the head of some renowned saint of St. Genevieve's acquaintance; the bones of the patroness of Paris herself, with her linen, and other property found in her chapel*, of which age had obliterated the knowledge, with arms, legs, toes, and little fingers of illustrious martyrs, became the prey of revolutionary flames, kindled with bundles of the real wood of the crosses.

But these civic sacrifices were not confined to the worshippers of the established system; the sec-

* This holy ark had been regarded with religious awe, as the palladium of Paris, and a security for the protection of St. Genevieve. It had been estimated at millions: but whatever might have been its worth in former times, it was now considerably diminished, since the precious stones with which it was ornamented had been displaced by other stones of little value. The figures engraved on this sacred utensil were singular enough for a saint. On one side was Mutius Scævola, in the heroic act of putting his hand into the flames, with Constantine the Great, and Jupiter and Hebe; while Venus and Cupids were sporting on the other. The saint had surely paid little attention to the outside of the dwelling.

taries also burnt with the same patriotic zeal; the followers of Moses and of Calvin applauded these votive offerings of their catholic brethren. They beheld with secret satisfaction the downfall of a power, of which they had been for ages the victims, while they deposited the precious ornaments and utensils of their own worship, but without complimenting the state with the abjuration of their religious belief. In this madness against superstition some method was observed. Almost every monument that bore the mark of genius, every relic that could contribute to the progress of the arts, was preserved with care, and deposited in places of safety. Many a saint owes his rescue from destruction to the chisel of the sculptor or the painter's skill; and except in a few of the departments, nothing was destroyed that was worth preserving.

The great depository at St. Denis nevertheless suffered from this reforming rage. The crowns of Dagobert and Clovis; the sceptres of Philip the beautiful, and Henry the Fowler; the silver helmet and golden spurs of Charlemagne; and the rich variety of treasure arising from the munificence of sovereigns to the tutelary saint of France, were mingled together in the crucible of the mint. The bodies of these monarchs and heroes were not treated with equal respect; for, as the edict had gone forth against every vestige of royalty, and every mark or remnant of aristocracy, the tombs in which they had been for ages quietly inurned were forced to open their ponderous jaws; and those furious Jacobins, worse than "the hellish rout that tore the Thracian bard in Rhodope," had the satisfaction to see the bones and ashes of the long line of their Charles's, Henri's, and Louis; of their Condés, Montmorencies, and Turennes, be-

fore whose lowest valets they would have trembled in submissive silence, become the prey of famished dogs, and the sport of the winds.

One of the pretences for this violation of the dead, which was general around Paris, and in some of the neighbouring departments, was the want of the coffins that enclosed them to make bullets for the use of the army. The cemeteries were therefore called the revolutionary lead-mines. If the ramblings of imagination might be indulged amidst the horror which this sort of plunder inspired, we might pursue these revolutionary instruments of death to their destination, and see many an emigrant laid prostrate with the former covering of his parents' dust. On many a countenance doomed to long night, the sun once again shone, and many met its beams, whose features preserved all their original force and character. Among others, madame Sevigné was found entire, with the unfading bloom of healthy and virtuous old age: but as the edict against aristocracy and privileges comprehended talents as well as birth, the wise as well as the mighty suffered in the general proscription against lead coffins; except Descartes, whose bones were put into a basket, and carried to the Pantheon, where he is fated to repose with the "immortal and divine Marat."

LETTER XV.

WHILE Paris was delivered up to the most execrable factions, of which I shall hereafter give you a detail, the western departments became the

theatre of calamities infinitely more tremendous. The struggles which took place previously to the 31st of May between the republicans and the conspirators, together with the defeat of the northern armies, and the defection of Dumourier, had diverted the attention of government from the dangers by which they were menaced in the Vendée. Of this war we yet know but little, and what we do know is only the history written by the party which persecuted.

Of all the evils which infest mankind, those occasioned by war are the most destructive. The hurricane, the earthquake, and the volcano, those convulsions in nature which shake the earth to its basis, and seem to threaten it with annihilation, are not to be compared with the scourges of war. We read of cities besieged and taken by storm, without sympathizing very deeply in the history. We see neither the insidious mine which shatters a thousand limbs at one blow, nor hear the cannon and the bomb, which perform the work of destruction more openly. The soldier climbing precipices, or scaling walls, to fall with indiscriminate rage on the old, the infant, and the defenceless, and to convert flourishing cities into one vast cemetery, is only a being of romance to those who have lived at a distance from such scenes, and the tenor of whose days has glided away in tranquillity. When the laws of war according to the regulations of civilized society are observed, the miseries are still tremendous: the laws of nature are perverted; it is the young, not the old, that descend first to the tomb, and all the dear and tender relations of life are broken—the father laments his son—the wife the husband torn from them to serve the purposes of ambition or cruelty—whole countries are depopu-

lated, fields lie uncultivated, and famine produces despair.

If such are the evils attendant on war when men murder each other without provocation and without resentment; when they scarcely know either the cause of the dispute which brought them into the field, or for whom they are going to shed their blood; what must be the horror of that conflict where every regulation of humanity is considered as conspiracy and treason, where every action becomes laudable in proportion as it becomes ferocious; where murder is the only mark of bravery, and where extermination alone is conquest!

The progress of the royalists after the events of the 10th of August to the epocha of Dumourier's defection, had remained unnoticed; nor was it till they had raised a most formidable camp and menaced Nantes, Angers, and other cities, and issued their formal manifestoes demanding the re-establishment of the priesthood, nobility, and royalty, that any effective measures were taken to repress them. The first generals that were sent against them, who were Berruyer, Marie, and Ligonier, acted, it is said, as if they were their allies, rather than their enemies; and Quétinau, who succeeded them, is accused of having surrendered Touars, with the magazines which it contained, and an army of four thousand men.

These defections on the one side, and the victories of the royalists on the other, at length roused the convention, who decreed that an army of three hundred thousand men should be raised to succour what they called the patriots in the Vendée, who were opposed by the robbers. As this seemed to be an extra-service, great rewards were given to those who would enlist to go and assist "their brethren;" but most of these heroes, who were paid

enormous sums to perform this act of charity, went and increased the armies of the malcontents, instead of fighting against them. A short time after the 31st of May, Saumur was taken by the royalists, and a number of other important places, Véhiers, Partenay, Bressuire, and Fontenay the capital of the department, fell into their power. The armies of the convention fled continually before numbers greatly inferior, and abandoned their magazines, baggage, and cannon; so that the Vendéan troops were furnished completely with stores of every kind from the cowardice of the conventional forces, or the treachery of their commanders. While these disgraces befel the armies on the western side, Nantes, which was besieged by an army of forty thousand men, was defended with five thousand, by Canclaux, who by the prudence and vigour of his operations saved the province of Brittany, and gained several important victories. Other generals who appeared to have the means as well as the intention of finishing the war expeditiously, among whom was the former duc de Biron*,

* Madame Roland was a prisoner with Biron in the Pelagie. "At this moment," she says, "Biron is my fellow prisoner. Biron came to Paris at the latter period of Pache's administration, to denounce him to the convention, provided with papers to prove the minister's dilapidations. Biron saw him, was seduced by his seeming frankness, and was persuaded that there was more of ignorance than of ill intention in his conduct. He felt how cruel it would be to send a man to the scaffold who might only have been deceived: he abandoned his intention, of which he informed Pache himself. Pache comes to an explanation, gets into his own hands the papers and proofs of the complaints against him, and sends Biron to the army in Italy [the Vendée she ought to have said] where he leaves him in want of every thing. He gains a few advantages, nothing is said about them; he makes reclamations, no attention is paid; the time runs on, the evil increases; he insists, and is ordered to Paris, where he arrives, and is shut up in the Pelagie. He now knows the hand of Pache: in the tyrant who oppresses him."

were suspended, as well as Canclaux, while Ronfin and Rossignol, two *sansculotte* generals, were loaded with eulogiums by the conspirators of Paris, in proportion as they were defeated by the royalists.

The royalists, encouraged by their successes, and finding themselves so well seconded by these generals, marched on the 27th of July towards Angers, and to a bridge which was an important pass, called the bridge of Cé. Orders were given to evacuate this post, as had been done in preceding instances. But contrary measures being taken by a deputy in mission, and other dispositions being made by general Tune, both places were saved, and for the first time a victory was obtained. This general gained a still greater advantage, and a fortnight after he was broke.

The evacuation of Cholet by the royalists would have been the consequence of their defeat; but when general Rey was proposing to take advantage of his victory, an imperial edict of the same *sansculotte* general forced him to a retreat. As a reward for successes which Rey afterwards gained, he also was broke; and his adjutant, who came to Paris to plead for him, was thrown into the dungeon of the Conciergerie.

These plans of military operations were not likely to be attended with much success, and have appeared at all times mysterious. Phillipeaux, in his strictures on this war, calls it a strange phenomenon for history, that the government should have looked calmly on, whilst those who gained victories were disgraced, and those whose only prowess had consisted in converting whole armies composed of some of the bravest and best disciplined troops in the republic, into heaps of carcases, were caressed and continued in command. Phillippeaux,

in his letter to the committee of public safety, assures them that the two generals Ronfin and Rosignol had butchered from forty to fifty thousand patriots.

But time reveals most mysteries. At this period the conspirators in Paris were more in dread of the resentment of the departments than they were of the army of the royalists. Of the various calumnies which they invented against the deputies who had fled from Paris, that of joining the royalists was the most industriously propagated; and while the proscribed deputies were held up to the public as the supporters and actors in a cause which all parties agreed to call rebellion, the conspirators found themselves justified in taking the measures best fitted to exterminate the only rivals they had to dread. Had the royalists been defeated, and the rebellion crushed, the calumny would have been discovered, and all pretence for punishment taken away. It was the interest therefore of the usurpers to menace the people with the vengeance of royalism, and federalism united; and none were better calculated to fulfil their intentions, than those inexperienced and profligate men, who had the most remarkable talents for procuring the defeat of the armies they commanded.

Whether or no this be the real explanation of that which has been deemed so mysterious, must be left to the consideration of those who wish to penetrate into this labyrinth. When we see the history of the war of the Vendée written by the royalists themselves, it is probable that they will say, that their own valour, and the goodness of the cause in which they were engaged, gave them these victories. In yielding its full force to this explanation, and supposing that the conventional armies were defeated by braver troops, it will yet remain

unexplained, why, of two classes of conventional generals, those who beat and those who were beaten, the former should have found either imprisonment, or the scaffold, and the others prodigality of favours.

The usurpers having succeeded in their criminal designs against the republican party, now found it necessary to rid themselves of the royalists, whom they had hitherto made useful to their designs. The latter end of August they formed a different plan for the remainder of the campaign, which consisted in attacking at once the royalists from every point, and finishing the contest as it were at a single blow. The army on the northern side was committed to Rossignol and Ronfin, and the revolutionary legions and the army on the western coast were entrusted to Lechelle. However well this plan might have been combined, the first specimen those who were to execute it gave of obedience to their instructions was to suffer the insurgents to take possession of the island of Noirmoutier, Machecoul, and other places, and evacuate Montaigu, where they abandoned immense magazines of every sort, and the army was reduced to sleep in the open air; while their ignorant or treacherous leaders kept at a convenient distance, surrounded by actresses, courtesans, and all the licentiousness of an eastern camp, with all the vulgarity of the lowest profligacy.

This defeat was followed by many others, and by the capture also of several towns. The expedition which Lechelle made was so contrived, that his troops had not the means of effecting a retreat. The protection of the city of Nantes was entrusted to him, and he suffered a body of some hundred royalists to cut off its provisions for several days in the face of his whole army; and when the represen-

tatives of the people requested him to send a detachment to rescue a convoy of flour which had fallen into the enemy's hands, he treated the application with contempt.

While this general was disposing of the conventional armies on the western side, his colleagues Rossignol and Ronfin, the latter of whom having seen some service took the title of *minister-general*, were preparing to execute the plan of the campaign on the other side. Instead of marching to attack the enemy, they halted for some time at Saumur and Tours, so as to let the royalist army acquire its proper consistency. To surround the enemy was the great object; and orders were sent to the commanders of the southern armies at Niort, Luçon, and Partenay, to co-operate. The event of this arrangement was, conformably to the ordinary system, the total defeat of these divisions; and on the 18th of September so admirably were the instructions obeyed, that fifty thousand men at Coran and near the passage of the Loire at Cé, commanded by Ronfin and Rossignol, were attacked by an army consisting of three thousand royalists only; and what could appear scarcely credible, the *sansculotte* generals had so ingeniously arranged their troops, that they were not only defeated by this inconsiderable detachment, but the slaughter was immense.

This extraordinary defeat will not, I am told, surprise any military man, when he hears that the conventional army was arranged for battle in a single column, in the defiles of Coran, with eight men in front, and presenting a flank to the enemy, who had possession of the heights, of nearly twelve miles in extent. The artillery, instead of being placed on those heights, under the protection of a strong detachment, as was proposed by the guides,

and those who knew the country, was placed at the head of this long column, and of course fell into the hands of the royalists, who turned it against the conventional troops, and made great carnage. In the mean time, detachments of the enemy gained possession of the heights without difficulty and without resistance, massacred the troops below, taking them in flank, and made them, from the confusion into which they were thrown, the exterminators of each other.

The generals who commanded this expedition were, in the mean time, regaling themselves at a distance, with their mistresses, some of whom were afterwards goddesses of reason; but they had the prudence to destroy their magazines, instead of leaving them as usual at the disposition of the enemy. The harvest of that part of the country was just then gathered in, and would have sufficed them for a whole year, had they secured it agreeably to the orders of the convention.

This new plan of a campaign was not attended with more happy success than the former, and the mystery which embarrassed Phillippeaux became still more inexplicable. It would be difficult indeed to define what could be the motive which led the government to look with so much complacency on this continued system of defeat and carnage, did we not see what combinations of crooked policy were put into execution to secure the purposes of ferocious ambition. The party of the Gironde, being completely crushed, gave them no longer any inquietude, and it became now the interest of the usurpers to bring the war to a speedy issue. The two former plans not having succeeded, the committee of public safety published another. These conspirators had seen how efficacious their decrees had been in several instances, and therefore

imagined a mode of putting an end to this destructive contest by decreeing that it should finish on the 20th of October, and that the generals should receive the triumphal crown on the first of November following. We should be inclined to smile at this excess of folly, if that disposition were not suppressed by indignation and horror at the atrocious orders which were given for this purpose to their armies, "that desolation and indiscriminate destruction must now become the order of the day."

The decree having stated in express terms, "that all the retreats, mills, and ovens of the robbers should be destroyed and burnt, and that the minister of war should be ordered to send combustible matter for that purpose;" and the proclamation of the convention having invited the soldiers of liberty to exterminate all these robbers, before the end of October; "the soldiers of liberty," and all those who were invited to the accomplishment of this new plan of the campaign, prepared to put it into execution. Neither the committee of usurpation, nor the convention had been nice in the definition of their terms, and therefore the soldiers of liberty undertook to construe them at their pleasure. Accordingly, every house of the peaceful inhabitant came within the definition of the retreat of a robber, since every inhabitant of the Vendée was considered as a robber, and consequently his dwelling must be a retreat.

Whether or no the instruments of this barbarous and execrable policy reasoned after this manner, they certainly became practical logicians; and the army, in addition to their hundred thousand bayonets, were armed with a hundred thousand torches; and having been pronounced by the usurpers the executors of their just vengeance, the property of the armed royalist and the peaceable republican be-

came alike objects of their rapacity and fury; and indiscriminate massacre and plunder were literally the order of the day.

In the first days of the revolution, when liberty and philosophy went hand in hand together, what a moral revolution was instantly effected throughout Europe, by the sublime and immortal principles which this great change seemed about to introduce into government! But what eternal regrets must the lovers of liberty feel, that her cause should have fallen into the hands of monsters ignorant of her charms, by whom she has been transformed into a Fury, who, brandishing her snaky whips and torches, has enlarged the limits of wickedness, and driven us back into regions of guilt hitherto unknown!

So unexampled are the crimes which have been committed, that it will require stronger evidence than the historian is commonly bound to produce, to persuade future generations of their reality. Alas! but a faint outline has been drawn of this terrifying picture, over which the friend of liberty would, if it were possible, like the recording angel, drop a tear, that might blot it out for ever.—“If some sweet oblivious antidote” could drive from my brain the remembrance of these things, and from my heart the feelings that oppress it, as well as from the knowledge of the world, I should be tempted to snatch from the enemies of Liberty the triumph they assume from this mournful history. But these horrors must stain the page of the revolution for ever. The bloody characters must remain indelible on the wall, a dreadful, but instructive lesson to future ages, and to those countries which are destined to labour through revolutions, and who will learn, while they contemplate this terrific chart, how to avoid the rocks on which Liberty has been nearly wrecked.

Dreadful indeed has been the crisis we have passed ! yet it is some consolation, amidst this mighty mass of evil, that France is at length beginning to learn wisdom from the things she has suffered. France no longer looks around to find apologies for the crimes that have been committed : she herself holds up the criminals to the world. She boasts not of her victories over Europe armed against her rights ; but she triumphs in the conquests she has made over herself. It is some relief, while I am struggling through the gloomy history of these horrors, that I see again the dawn of that glorious light which will chase them away. The last stroke has been given to that vile and degrading system, which ignoble usurpers had framed : we may now approach the altar of Liberty with confidence and hope ; the hideous spectres that haunted it have fled for ever ; and its incense in future will rise grateful to heaven, and spread fragrance over a regenerated land.

A P P E N D I X.

No. I.

THE representatives of the French people undersigned, considering that, amidst events which excite the indignation of the whole republic, they cannot remain silent with respect to the attempts committed against the national representation, without feeling themselves chargeable with the most shameful pusillanimity, or with becoming still more guilty sharers in the crime :

Considering that the same conspirators, who, from the very period in which the republic was proclaimed, had never discontinued their attacks on the national representation, have at length filled up the measure of their crimes, in violating the majesty of the people in the persons of their representatives, by driving some to seek their safety in flight, by imprisoning others, and forcing the rest to bend their necks under the yoke of the most insulting tyranny :

Considering that the heads of this faction, emboldened by long impunity, growing strong through excess of impudence, and relying on the number of their accomplices, have seized on all the branches of the executive government, on the treasury, on the means of defence and the resources of the nati-

on, which they dispose of at their pleasure, and which they are employing to effect its ruin :

Considering that they have at their command the chiefs of the military force, and the constituted authorities of Paris ; that the majority of the inhabitants of this city, intimidated by the excesses of a faction which the law is unable to reach, affrighted by proscriptions with which they are continually threatened, find themselves not only incapable of destroying the machinations of the conspirators, but often, through respect to the law, which enjoins obedience to the constituted authorities, compelled even to become as it were accomplices in their crimes :

Considering that so great is the oppression under which the national convention labours, that not one of its decrees can be executed, unless it be approved or dictated by the heads of this faction ; that the conspirators have in fact set themselves up as the only organ of the public will, and that they have reduced the rest of the national representation to be the passive instruments of their pleasure :

Considering that the national convention, after having been forced to invest with unlimited powers those commissaries who have been sent into the departments and to the armies, and who have been chosen exclusively by this faction, has been unable to check the arbitrary acts which they have committed, or even to protest against the incendiary and disorganizing principles which the majority amongst them have propagated :

Considering that not only has the national convention been rendered incapable of prosecuting the despoilers of the public wealth, or the wretches who have given orders for murder and pillage ; but even these same conspirators, after having failed in their designs on the night of the 10th and the 11th

of March, have accomplished them with more success on the 20th, 21st, 27th, and 31st of May, and on the 2d of June last past :

Considering that at this last epocha they beat to arms, rung the tocsin, and fired the alarm guns ; that the barriers of the city were shut, all communication cut off, the secrecy of letters violated, the hall of the convention blockaded by an armed force of more than 60,000 men ; that a formidable artillery was stationed at every avenue of the national palace ; that furnaces were fixed to serve the guns with red hot balls, and that every preparation was made for an attack ; that the battalions enrolled for the Vendée, but detained for this purpose in the neighbourhood of Paris, were amongst the number of the besiegers ; that ruffians in the pay of the conspirators, and fitted for the execution of their bloody projects, occupied the most important posts and the passages of the hall ; that they were openly rewarded for their zeal by distributions of provisions and money ; that at the moment when the national convention presented itself in full assembly at the avenue of the national palace to enjoin the military to withdraw, the commander, invested by the conspirators with the most absolute dictatorship, had the audacity to insist that the proscribed deputies should be delivered up to the vengeance of the people ; and that on the refusal of the convention he had the impudence to call to arms, and put in danger the lives of the representatives of the French people :

Considering, finally, that it is by machinations such as these that they have forced from the convention, or rather from a sixth part of the members who compose it, a decree which pronounced the arbitrary seizure and deprived of their functions, without accusation, without evidence, in contempt of

all forms, and through the most criminal violation of the rights of man and the national sovereignty, thirty-two representatives marked out and proscribed by the conspirators themselves:

They declare to their constituents, to the citizens of every department, and to the French people, whose rights and sovereignty have been thus shamefully violated, that from the moment in which the unity of the national representation has been broken by an act of violence, of which the history of nations has never yet furnished an example, they have neither been able nor have they thought it their duty to take any part in the deliberations of the assembly:

That driven by these unhappy circumstances to the impossibility of opposing by their individual exertions the slightest obstacle to the success of the conspirators, they can only proclaim to the whole republic the hateful scenes of which they have been both the witnesses and the victims.

Paris, the 6th of June,
ad year of the French Republic.

Signed by seventy-three deputies.

No. II.

REPUBLICANS, you are acquainted with the dangers which threaten the public weal. They are so great that we must either take arms and die in the field of honour, or submit to the stroke of the assassin in our homes. We must save the republic, or perish with it: we must crouch to anarchy, or destroy it. We must resume our rank among the nations, or yield the precedence to the slave of the Asiatic despot, or the uncivilized Tartarian horde.

When the national representation, by losing its unity, becomes virtually dissolved; when the de-

departments, whose deputies are shamefully arrested, consider themselves in reality as no longer represented; when the majesty of the people is violated by the attempts committed against its mandates; when the faction which is longing for the return of royalty insolently domineers over that corrupted city by which we are menaced, there is no longer any room for hesitation.

Shame and slavery, or let us fly to Paris! You waste the precious moments which are yet left to apply the remedy, in deliberating on the disease. Your country, your liberties, your honour as Frenchmen, yourselves, your wives, and children, are lost. Neither public nor private fortunes any longer exist: you lose four years of toil, of care, of labour, of watchings, of battles, and torrents of blood shed in defence of the most glorious of causes. These will be inevitably lost, and it is but a vile handful of factious traitors who are deciding on the liberty of twenty-five millions of men.

In this critical and desperate situation one general voice is heard from the centre to the confines of the republic. It proclaims that the nation is roused, to conquer or die. The nation is roused; let us march! Marseilles calls on you; Marseilles which has unquestionably so much right to your confidence, and so deep a concern in the support of this revolution, of which she has given so noble an example. This appeal is the last use which she wishes to make of the liberty of speech in order to promulgate the great resolutions she has adopted, and the decisive measures she has taken. Far from a warlike people, far from a nation of soldiers, who wait only the signal for battle, be the vain tinsel of words! To dare, and to act, is all we have to do.

Let us strike; and let Frenchmen, so long characterised as frivolous, shew the world, that if they

deserved the imputation while under the controul of kings, they have now resumed their antient habits, and are become independent and formidable like the Gauls and the Franks, from whom they glory in being descended.

Republicans, who pant for liberty and detest licentiousness, who abhor royalty, and desire the establishment of the republic united and undivided, league yourselves with the Marseillois, who breathe the same vows already made by a considerable number of departments. They declare that the present political state of Paris is equivalent to a declaration of civil war against the whole republic.

They accuse, and present to you as guilty of all the disorders that afflict France, Philip d'Orleans and his faction; the frantic monster * whose venal howlings are his purchase, and whose name would fully this declaration; the den of the Jacobins of Paris; the seditious and factious men who are spreading themselves throughout the republic, and exciting it to commotion. Marseilles points them out as common enemies, who have been wishing to lead us to the brink of the precipice, to adulterate their monstrous but measured system of anarchy with a king of their own creating: and this king would have been the most dishonoured being in existence; a man overwhelmed with debt, rich in disgrace, debauchery, and baseness; a man whom no virtuous citizen would admit among his servants, and who would be driven by themselves from their society; a man, in short, who is imprisoned within our walls, and of whose speedy and severe punishment we are equally desirous.

We invite you to sign with us this just and indispensable covenant which we propose for the

* Marat.

public safety, and to wipe off the stain of so many injuries.

1. Marseilles, therefore, declares, that it is in a legal state of resistance to oppression, and that it is authorised by the law to make war against the seditious:

2. That it can no longer acknowledge a convention whose unity is violated, to be the national representation; and that at that period only, when the deputies of the people shall be fully and freely reinstated in their functions, the nation will obey its orders with confidence and submission:

3. That the throne of anarchy has been raised on the wrecks of the throne you have overturned, and that tyranny is detestable in proportion to the corruption of those who are prompted to exercise it:

4. That the conspirators have already proceeded to dissolve the national convention by reducing and disorganizing it, and exciting it to acts of folly, rashness, and disorder; and that the French nation can consider those acts which are promulgated by a portion of its representatives who yet keep their seats, only as evidences of the tyranny exercised over some by the perfidy and wickedness of others:

5. That the imprisonment of a great number of deputies of the convention is an attempt made in the delirium of guilt, an act which posterity will scarcely believe, if its authenticity were not proved by the record of the just vengeance we have sworn to take, and which you will aid us in inflicting:

6. That the good citizens who still inhabit Paris are invited to assist, as much as lies in their power, the united efforts which we are going to make for the public welfare, and to let the whole weight of the responsibility rest on the heads of the conspirators, which we declare are forfeited by their crimes:

7. That the domineering faction at Paris has compelled the departments to lead into that city, so long the prey and sport of ambitious men, the military force which is the last resource of the sovereign people; declaring at the same time that the united force under the direction of the departments, and in conformity to their wishes, is destined to extirpate those whose criminal hands have been employed in effecting the ruin of their country:

8. That every man capable of bearing arms is summoned, in the name of the law, in that of his own and the public interest, and in the name of humanity, to join his efforts in strengthening the dyke which we are opposing to this desolating torrent; that he may avoid being swept away into that abyss which the anarchists and infamous plunderers have opened before us:

9. That by decreeing a levy of a stated number of men ready to join in mass to destroy utterly every faction in its strong-hold, the Marseillois, who are solicitous to finish a revolution which they began, and make the example which they have just given an object of imitation, call upon every citizen to join them who is anxious to deserve well of mankind.

They have taken this preliminary step only in consideration of the urgency of the measures to be adopted, submitting them to the examination and the approbation of the whole sovereign body, without pretending to set bounds to the zeal of the generous defenders of their country, who shall voluntarily come forward to strengthen the phalanx of liberty. They hope that it will increase in its march, and that every citizen anxious for the public weal will bear a part:

10. That in the colours of this army the soldiers of the country shall read inscribed the accomplish-

ment of every good law: "The republic united and undivided, respect for persons and property;" words of consolation already graven on every heart:

11. That we appeal to God, and to our arms, against the attempts that have been made on the unity of the national representation, against the violence which has been exercised on the personal liberty of our special deputies, against the conspiracies destructive of liberty, from which the superintendence of Providence has delivered us, of which Marseilles is pursuing the accomplices who undertook to execute the most horrible deeds within its walls. A popular tribunal, the guardian of established and well regulated order, is carrying on the prosecution of the conspirators, notwithstanding the obstacles with which it is surrounded. Invested with the confidence of the people, and by them supported, the most imperious law, that of circumstances, determines the activity of its operations; and the people of Marseilles, far from deserving to be considered as disobedient to the law, in making use of the sword to punish the guilty, fulfil the first of social duties, which consists in the distribution of the most exemplary justice.

It is thus that the city of Marseilles, in addition to the motives arising from the general danger of the republic, joins the detail of the particular grievances which affect its tranquillity, and explains the necessity it is under of silencing its calumniators, who, in despair at not having succeeded in kindling the torch of discord among us, have dared to present it to the convention as the light of truth.

Republicans, the signal is given. The moments are precious, and the measures are decisive. Let us march, let the law enter with us into Paris! and if you are unacquainted with the way, follow the

traces of the blood of your brethren, which will lead you to the feet of its walls, from whence have issued forth those murderous scourges, those sanguinary conspiracies, and that consuming traffic of finance, the source of all our misery.

There you will give liberty to good citizens, dignity to the national convention, the ruffians will disappear, and the republic will be saved.

Taken into consideration in the general committee of the 32 sections of Marseilles, the 12th of June, 1793, the second year of the French republic.

Signed,

PELOUX, President.

CASTELLANET and } Secretaries.

PINATAL,

Yesterday, the 16th, all the administrative bodies took the oath expressed in the manifesto.

No. III.

THE accusation against me is founded wholly on the supposition of my being an accomplice with men called conspirators. My friendship for a few of those persons is prior to the political circumstances which form the charge against them. The correspondence I held with them by an intermediate channel, at the time of their departure from Paris, is altogether foreign to state affairs. I have had in truth no political correspondence; and in this respect I might absolutely deny the charge; yet, although I cannot be called upon to give an account of my private affections, I may

glory in them, as I do in the whole of my conduct, and I have nothing to conceal from the world.

I declare then, that I have received testimonies of regret on account of my imprisonment, and was informed that Duperret had two letters for me; but whether written before or after my friends had left Paris, whether from one or two of them, I am altogether ignorant, since these letters have never reached me. At another time, I was earnestly conjured to escape from my prison, and received offers of assistance in the attempt, and to convey me to whatever place I should think proper. I was deterred from accepting these offers, from considerations both of duty and honour; of duty, because I would not injure those to whose care I was committed; of honour, since in all cases I should prefer exposing myself to the consequences of every possible vexation, rather than incur the appearances of guilt, by a flight unworthy of my character. I should not have been so careless with regard to my safety on the 31st of May, had I had an intention of effecting my escape at a later period. This is the extent of my connections with my friends who fled. Undoubtedly if the communication had not been interrupted between us, or if I had not been restrained by my imprisonment, I should have endeavoured to procure information concerning them, for I knew of no law that forbids it. Alas! in what age, or amongst what people were those sentiments of esteem and fidelity which bind men to each other, ever accounted a crime? I do not pretend to decide upon the measures taken by those who were proscribed: but I never will believe that those men have intended ill, whose integrity, patriotism, and generous devotion to their country I have seen so clearly displayed. If they have erred, their errors are those of virtue; they are overcome without being degraded; they

are unfortunate in my eyes, without being guilty. If I am criminal in offering vows for their safety, I declare myself so to the whole world. I am under no concern for their glory, and I willingly share in the honour of being oppressed by their enemies. I have known these generous men who are accused of having conspired against their country. They were firm but humane republicans; they were persuaded that good laws were necessary to make the republic beloved by those who had no confidence in its stability: but this was indeed a more difficult task than to murder them. The history of all ages has proved that great talents are necessary to lead men to virtue by good laws, while violence alone has been sufficient to restrain them by terror, or annihilate them by death. I have heard my friends maintain that plenty, like happiness, could only result from an equitable government; that the omnipotence of bayonets might produce fear, but not bread. I have seen them animated by the warmest enthusiasm for the happiness of the people, disdaining to flatter them, determined to fall rather the victims of their blindness, than deceive them. I own that these principles and this conduct have appeared to me altogether different from those of tyrants and ambitious men, who amuse the people only to enslave them. It is for these reasons that I am filled with esteem for these generous men. This error, if it be one, will go with me to the grave, and I shall glory in following those whom I could not accompany thither.

My defence, I may venture to assert, is more necessary to those who are desirous of being informed, than it is to myself. Conscious of having fulfilled my duties, I look to the future with security and confidence. My taste for study and

my habits of retirement have kept me at a distance both from the follies of dissipation, and from the bustle of intrigue. Enamoured of liberty, the value of which I learnt from reflection, I viewed the revolution with transport, persuaded that it was the epocha of the subversion of despotism, which I detest; of the reformation of abuses, under which I had often sighed, while the fate of the unhappy and oppressed hung upon my heart. I have followed the progress of the revolution with solicitude. I have expressed myself on the subject with warmth; but I have never overpassed the limits prescribed me by my sex. Some talents perhaps, a little philosophy, a greater degree of courage, and which in times of danger did not weaken that of my husband, are probably what those who knew me have imprudently ascribed to me, and which may have contributed to make me enemies amongst those by whom I was not known. Roland sometimes employed me as his secretary; and the celebrated letter to the king, for instance, was copied wholly by me. This would be a good paper enough to frame part of my indictment, if the Austrians were my prosecutors, and thought proper to extend the responsibility of the minister to his wife. But Roland had long since displayed his sentiments, and his love of great principles. The evidence of this exists in the numerous books which he has published during these fifteen years past. His knowledge and his integrity are eminently his own; and he had no need of a wife to become a wise and faithful minister. Neither conferences nor cabals have ever been held at his house. His friends, his colleagues, whoever they were, and his acquaintances met at his table once a week, where in very public conversation they discoursed openly on those topics in which every one was interested. On the

whole, the writings of this minister breathe throughout the love of order and peace, explaining in the most affecting manner the best principles of morality and policy. They will for ever bear witness to his wisdom, as the accounts he has given in bear witness to his integrity.

I return to the crime imputed to me. I observe that I had no intimate acquaintance with Duperret. I had sometimes seen him, while my husband was minister, but he had not visited me during the six months that have elapsed since Roland quitted the administration: and I might make the same remark respecting the other deputies who were our friends; which certainly does not tally with the accusation of conspiracy and secret understanding imputed to us. It is clear from my first letter to Duperret, that I wrote to this deputy, only because I found it difficult to write to any other, with the idea that he would be inclined to render me service. My correspondence with him, therefore, was not a thing projected; it was not the sequel of any preceding connections; and it had no political view. It furnished me with an opportunity of receiving intelligence of those who were absent, and with whom I was in habits of friendship, altogether independent of political considerations. Such considerations formed no part of the correspondence which I held with them in the first moments of their absence. No memorial to this effect is brought in evidence against me. Those which are produced, only intimate that I share in the opinions of those who are called conspirators. This induction is founded, I own it to the world, and I glory in this conformity of sentiment; but I have never published these sentiments in any manner that can be imputed to me as a crime. In order to establish the being an accomplice in any project, it must be proved that advice has been giv-

en, and means furnished. I have done neither ; I am therefore not guilty in the eyes of the law ; there is none which can condemn me ; there exists no fact for the application of any.

I know that in revolutions, law as well as justice is often forgotten ; and the evidence of this is, that I am at this bar. I am indebted for this prosecution only to those prejudices and that violent hatred which burst forth amidst great convulsions, and which, in general, fix upon those who are placed in conspicuous situations, or who are known to possess energy of character. It would have been easy for me to have avoided this trial which I foresaw ; but I thought it more becoming to meet it : I thought that I owed this example to my country : I thought that if I should be condemned, I should leave to my tyrants the odium of sacrificing a woman who had no other crime than perhaps some talents of which she seldom availed herself, great zeal for the interests of mankind, courage to adhere to her unfortunate friends, and to render homage to truth at the hazard of her life. Those who have true greatness of soul throw away selfish feelings, remember that they belong only to the species, and look to futurity for their reward. I belong to the virtuous and persecuted Roland. I was in habits of friendship with men whom ignorance and the jealous hatred of low, vulgar minds have proscribed and murdered. I am to perish also, because it is consistent with the principles of tyranny to sacrifice those whom it has cruelly oppressed, and annihilate every witness of its crimes. Under both these titles you ought to condemn me to die, and I await my sentence. When innocence mounts the scaffold to which it is condemned by error or wickedness, it reaches the goal of triumph. May I be the last victim that shall be sacrificed ! I shall leave with joy this unhappy land, which is destroying the good, and drinking in the

blood of the just. O truth, my country, friendship, sacred objects, sentiments dear to my heart, receive my last offering ! My life was devoted to you, and ye alone spread a softness and grace over my last moments ! God of Heaven ! enlighten this unhappy people, for whose liberty I breath my warmest vows !—Liberty !—to those great souls it eminently belongs who despise death, and who can meet it with courage : but it was not formed for weak minds, who compound with crime, while they conceal their self-love and their cowardice under the name of prudence. It was not formed for those profligate men, who, rising from their beds of debauchery, or creeping forth from a sink of wretchedness, run and bathe themselves in the blood that streams from the scaffolds. But it is the guardian of a wise and humane people who practise justice, despise flatterers, know their true friends, and revere truth. As long as you shall not form such a people, O my fellow-citizens ! you will talk in vain of liberty ; you will live only in a state of licentiousness, of which each of you will fall the victim in your turn ; you will ask for bread, but you will find only mangled carcases, and you will end in being slaves.

I have concealed neither my sentiments, or opinions. I know that a Roman lady was sent to execution under Tiberius, for having lamented her son. I know that in times of blindness and party-spirit, whoever dares to avow himself the friend of condemned or proscribed men, exposes himself to share their fate ; but I despise death. I have never feared any thing but guilt ; and I would not purchase my life at the price of meanness.

Unhappy times, unhappy people, when the obligation of rendering justice to injured virtue is beset with danger ; but too happy are those who have

courage to brave it.—It is now for you to examine if it be compatible with your interests to condemn in defect of evidence, for simple opinions only, and without the support of any law.

No. IV.

AFTER the siege of Perugia, say the historians, in spite of the capitulation, the answer of Augustus was: "You must all perish." Three hundred of the principal citizens were dragged to the altar of Julius Cæsar, and there on the day of the ides of March were murdered: after which the remainder of the inhabitants were put without distinction to the edge of the sword; and the city, which was one of the finest in Italy, was reduced to ashes, and as much effaced as Herculaneum from the surface of the earth.

There was formerly a law in Rome, says Tacitus, which defined state crimes and high treasons, and which decreed the punishment of pain of death. These crimes of high treason, under the republic, were reduced to four sorts: namely, if an army had been abandoned in an enemy's country; if sedition had been excited; if the members of the constituted bodies had mismanaged public affairs, or misapplied the public money; and if the majesty of the Roman people had been degraded. The emperors wanted but a few additional articles to this law to involve both the citizens and whole cities in a general proscription. Augustus was the first to extend this law of high treason, in which he comprehended writings which he called *counter-revolutionary*. Under his successors, the extension of this law became unbounded. When simple remarks were construed into state crimes, it required but a little stretch of

power to change looks either of compassion or sorrow, or even sighs, and silence itself, into guilt.

It was a crime of high treason or *counter-revolution* in the city of Nursia to have erected a monument to its inhabitants who were killed at the siege of Mutina, in fighting under Augustus himself: but it was, because Augustus then fought with Brutus; and Nursia met with the fate of Perugia.

Crime of *counter-revolution* in L. Drusus, for having enquired of fortune tellers whether he should not be at some future time a rich man. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Crematius Cordus, a news-writer, for having called Brutus and Cassius the last of the Romans. Crime of *counter-revolution* in one of the descendants of Cassius, for having in his possession a portrait of his great uncle. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Mamercus Securus, for having composed a tragedy in which there was a verse liable to a double construction. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Augustus Silenus, for living expensively. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Petreius, for having had a dream about Claudius. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Appius Silenus, because the wife of Claudius had had a dream about him. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Pomponius, because a friend of Sejanus had sought an asylum at one of his country-houses. Crime of *counter-revolution*, to complain of the misery of the times, for it was blaming the government. Crime of *counter-revolution*, in not invoking the divine genius of Caligula. For this omission, a great number of citizens were beaten with clubs, condemned to the mines, or to be thrown to the wild beasts, and some even to be sawed asunder. Crime of *counter-revolution* in the mother of the consul Fuscius Geminus, for having lamented the fatal death of her son. Unless you were willing to perish yourself, you must express

joy at the death of your friends or relations. Under Nero, many, whose kindred he had destroyed, went to return thanks to the gods, and illuminated their houses. It was necessary at least to wear an air of satisfaction and cheerfulness, and every one was afraid lest fear itself should be the means of his condemnation.

Every thing gave umbrage to the tyrant. Was a citizen popular? He was the prince's rival, and might kindle a civil war. *Studia civium in se verteret; et si multi idem audeant, bellum esse. Suspected.*

Did a man shun popularity, and confine himself to his fire-side? This retired kind of life made you remarked, and gave you consideration. *Quanto metu occultior, tanto plus famæ adeptus. Suspected.*

Were you rich? There was imminent danger that the people would be corrupted by your liberality. *Auri vim atque opes Plauti principi infensas. Suspected.*

Were you poor? What then?—Invincible emperor, this man must be watched more narrowly. There is no one so enterprising as he that has nothing. *Syllam inopem, unde præcipuam audaciam. Suspected.*

Are you of a thoughtful melancholy character, or slovenly in your manners? You are afflicted because public affairs go so well. *Hominem bonis publicis mœstum. Suspected.*

If, on the contrary, a citizen amuses himself and lives luxuriously; he is merry only because the emperor has had an attack of the gout, which happily is nothing: we must shew this gentleman that his majesty is in the prime of life. *Reddendam pro intempestivâ licentiâ mœstam et funebrem noctem, quâ sentiat vivere Virilium et imperare. Suspected.*

Was he virtuous, or austere in his manners? Good! a new Brutus, who pretends with his pale countenance and jacobin wig to criticise an agreeable and well-powdered court. *Gliscere æmulos Brutorum, vultus rigidi et tristis quo tibi lasciviam exprobrent. Suspected.*

Was he a philosopher, an orator, or a poet? He wanted to have more fame than those who were at the head of affairs! Could an author be tolerated who had more attention paid him in the upper gallery, than the emperor in the stage box? *Virginium et Rufum claritudo nominis. Suspected.*

In short, if you acquired military reputation, you became the more dangerous from your talents. With a silly general you knew what to do; if he became a traitor, he could not so dexterously betray his army to the enemy, but that some would come back. But an officer of merit, such as Corbulo or Agricola, if he became a traitor, not a man would return. The best way was to dispatch them. At least, great emperor, hasten and rid the army of them. *Multa militaris famæ metum fecerat. Suspected.*

You may well imagine that it was a very serious thing indeed if you were a grandson or one of the family of Augustus. You might some day have pretensions to the throne. *Nobilem, et quid hinc spectaretur à Cæsarum posteris. Suspected.*

And all the *suspected* did not get off as with us, by being sent to the Madelonettes, the Scotch College, or St. Pelagie*. The prince sent them to their physician or apothecary to choose in four-and-twenty hours what kind of death they liked best. *Missus centurio qui maturaret eum.*

* Prisons in Paris.

It was thus impossible to possess any kind of quality, unless it became an instrument of tyranny, without awaking the jealousy of the despot, or exposing yourself to certain ruin. It was a crime to have a great place, or resign it; but the greatest of all crimes was to be incorruptible. Nero had so thoroughly extirpated all good and virtuous men, that after having got rid of Thrasea and Soranes, he boasted that he had abolished even the name of Virtue from the earth. When the senate had condemned them, the emperor wrote a letter of thanks for their having put to death enemies of the republic. The tribune Clodius erected an altar to Liberty in the place where Cicero's house had been rased to the ground, and the people shouted, "Vive la Liberté!"

One was executed on account of his name, or or that of his ancestors, and another on account of a beautiful house at Alba. Valerius Asiaticus, because the empress was pleased with his gardens; Statilius, because she did not like the cut of his face; and a numerous multitude without any reason whatever.

Foranius, the tutor, the old friend of Augustus, was proscribed by his pupil without any apparent cause, except that he was an honest man, and loved his country. Neither age nor innocence could shield Quintus Gellius from the bloody hands of the executioner; and this same Augustus, whose clemency has been so much boasted, tore out his eyes with his own hands. You were betrayed and perished by your enemies or slaves; or if you had no enemy, your host, your friend, your son became your assassin.

In one word, under three reigns the natural death of a celebrated man was so rare a thing, that it was put into the gazette as a sort of epocha, and trans-

mitted by historians to the remembrance of ages. "Under this consulate," says our annalist, "the pontiff Piso died in his bed, which appeared somewhat miraculous."

The death of so many excellent citizens appeared a less calamity than the insolence and scandalous fortunes of their murderers and denunciators. Every day the sacred and inviolable informer made his triumphant entry into the palaces of the dead, and seized on some rich inheritance. All these denunciators assumed the most respectable names, and called themselves Cotta, Scipio, Regulus, Cassius, Severus. Denunciation was the only means of arriving at honours, and Regulus was made consul three times on account of his informations.

In this manner every one threw himself in the way of arriving at dignities, since the road was so easy; and the *marquis* Serenus, in order to make his first appearance with *éclat*, and gain reputation as an informer, began a prosecution against his aged father as a *counter-revolutionist*; after which he decorated himself with the founding name of Brutus.

The judges resembled the accusers: the tribunels, which ought to have been the protectors of life and property, were become butcheries; and robbery and murder bore the names of confiscation and punishment.

If there were no means of sending a man to the tribunal, he was assassinated or imprisoned. Celer *Ælius*, the famous *Locusta*, the physician *Anicetus*, were poisoners by profession, privileged men, travelling in the suite of the court, and a kind of lords of the bed-chamber to the crown. When these half-measures were not found sufficient, the tyrant had recourse to a general proscription. Thus it was that Caracalla declared all his friends and the partisans of *Sejanus* enemies of the republic, to the

number of thirty thousand. Thus it was that Sylla in one day forbade the use of fire and water to seventy thousand Romans. If a lion-emperor had a prætorian guard of tigers and panthers, they would not have torn in pieces a greater number than the common informers, the freedmen, the poisoners, and the cut-throats of the Cæsars; for the cruelty caused by hunger ceases with hunger, while that caused by fear, by the avarice and the suspicions of tyrants has no bounds. To what a degree of degradation and baseness must not the human race have fallen, when we think that Rome suffered the government of a monster, who complained that his reign had not been signalized by any calamity, pestilence, famine, or earthquake; who envied Augustus the happiness of having had under his empire an army cut to pieces, and in the reign of Tiberius the disaster of the amphitheatre of Fidenæ, where fifty thousand persons perished; and to sum up all in one word, who wished that the Roman people had but one neck, to put it *in mass* through * the little window!"

No. V.

The two last letters of young CUSTINE to his wife.

Nine o'clock in the morning.

I CANNOT begin my last day better than in speaking to you of the tender and painful sentiments which I feel on your account. I sometimes endeavour to suppress them, but they are never very distant from my mind. What will be your fate? They

* The cant word for the guillotine.

will leave you at least your habitation, your chamber at least? Melancholy ideas, melancholy reflections!

I have slept nine hours. Why was not your night as calm as mine? for it is your tenderness, not your affliction, that is necessary to me.

You already know the sacrifice that I have made. I have a poor unfortunate companion here who has seen you when you were a child, and who seems a worthy man. What a happiness it is at the close of my misfortunes to have the means of alleviating those of others. Tell this to Philoctetes.

I have forgotten to tell you that I made almost wholly my own defence, and only made it on account of those who love me.

Four o'Clock.

I MUST leave you———I send you my hair in this letter; madame promises me to give you both. Assure her of my gratitude.

It is all over, my poor Delphina: for the last time I embrace you! I cannot see you, and even if I could I would not. The separation would be too cruel, and these are not moments for indulging my feelings. What do I say? for indulging my feelings!—How shall I avoid so doing? Your image! —there is but one way—that of banishing it from my remembrance with savage but necessary barbarity. My reputation shall be such as it ought to be; and as for life, it is a thing frail by its nature. Regret a few, the only emotions which give a momentary disturbance to my tranquillity. You, who know so well my sentiments, will know how to express them; but drive from your thoughts the remembrance of those regrets which are the most painful to me, for they are addressed to you!

I do not believe that I have ever done evil to any person intentionally. I often felt the warmest desire to do good. I could have wished to have done more; but I do not feel the burden of remorse, and why should I feel any disquietude? To die is necessary, and, an event as natural as that of being born.—Your fate afflicts me—may it be softened!—may it even one day become happy!—This is the wish nearest to my heart.—Teach your son to know his father. May your watchful care banish vice far from him! and as for misfortune, may he learn how to bear it as he ought!

Farewell! I do not frame axioms of the hopes of my imagination or my heart; but be assured that I do not leave you without the expectation that we shall meet again. I have forgiven the few who seemed to rejoice in my imprisonment. Bestow a reward on the person who will convey to you this letter."

No. VI.

"THE situation of affairs, and the discontented state of the public mind, alarmed the court. The ministers soon became the object of general animadversion, and their conduct did not appear at all favourable to the establishment of the constitution, which the king had sworn to maintain contrary to his will and feelings, and which he was determined not to support. Amidst the frequent changes and confusion which then took place in administration, the court was puzzled and doubtful of whom to make choice. It was said openly and loudly, that, if the king was sincere, he would choose his ministers amongst men whose reputation for patriotism was not doubtful. The king had hitherto decided as cowardice or fear dictated; sometimes with the

hopes of gaining over those who were named, or with the resolution, if this plan did not succeed, of driving them altogether from the court. At length the king seemed determined to choose his ministers amongst those who were called patriots, for then the appellation was not dishonoured. How that came to pass I never have been informed. Intelligent men reflected how important it was to direct the choice of the court towards men of talents and of respectable character; for it was possible that it might have taken a malignant pleasure in making a selection of a set of wrong-headed Jacobins, whose blunders and exaggerations would have justified complaints, and brought disgrace on the whole body of patriots. I do not know who it was that in the committee of the Place Vendôme named Roland as one of those who ought to be chosen; but his name was connected with the idea* of a man well informed, who had written on several branches of administration, who had experience in these affairs, who besides possessed a considerable degree of reputation, and whose principles unequivocally expressed in his writings, even before the revolution, discovered him to be a warm partizan of liberty, being so in all respects. The king was not a stranger to these considerations, as I shall have occasion to prove.

This project was communicated to us only three days before the new ministry was formed. Brissot came to me one evening when I was alone, and told me that Roland was thought of as minister. I smiled, and asked him what he meant by his pleasantry? He answered me, that he was in earnest, informed me of what I have just related, and added,

* The committee of Place Vendôme was an assembly of patriot deputies, who met at the house of one of their colleagues for the discussion of public affairs.

that he was come to know if Roland would undertake the charge. I promised to speak to Roland on the subject, and give him an answer the next day. Roland was as much astonished as myself at the event. A multiplicity of affairs to one of his active mind was no cause of objection; and he told me, that as he had always observed placemen to be beings of a very middling rank with respect to talents, and yet public business went forward, he was not himself afraid of the undertaking; that the situation was indeed critical, on account of the distinct interest of the court and the uncertainty of the king's intentions; but that whoever attended only to his duty, and was careless about the loss of his place in executing it, had nothing to fear: besides which, a zealous man, who was conscientious in the means he made use of, could not be without hope of being of essential service to his country. Roland therefore determined to accept the office, and made known his intentions to Brissot, who came the next evening at eleven o'clock at the breaking up of the council, accompanied by Dumourier, who announced to him officially that the king had just made choice of him as minister for home-affairs. Dumourier, who had been minister for some little time, spoke of the king's sincere dispositions to support the constitution, and his hopes of seeing the machine go on with success, when the whole of the council should be animated by the same spirit: he testified also to Roland his particular satisfaction in seeing so virtuous and enlightened a patriot named to the administration of government.

Brissot observed that the department for home-affairs was the most delicate and the most intricate of all, and that it was a consolation to the friends of liberty to see it entrusted to pure and firm hands. The conversation turned slightly on these heads,

and the hour was fixed on for Roland the next day to be presented to his majesty, to take the oath, and his seat at the council.

I found in Dumourier the manly air of a soldier, the address of an able courtier, the style of a man of wit, but no trace of truth. In comparing this man with his new colleague, whose austerity and frankness sometimes border on rudeness, I asked myself if they were made to go on long together? "Here is a man," said Roland, after their departure, "who possesses talents." "Yes," replied I, "and against which you must be on your guard; for I think him capable of casting you all off, if you do not keep to his pace: we shall see." The first time Roland appeared at court in his ordinary simple dress, which he had for a long time worn for the sake of convenience, a few scattered hairs, combed over his venerable head, a round hat, and his shoes tied with strings, those valets of the court who placed the highest importance in the etiquette on which their own existence depends, looked at him with disdain, and with some astonishment. One of them approached Dumourier, and, knitting his brows, whispered him, while he pointed out with his eyes the object of his surprise, "Sir! sir! no buckles in his shoes!" Dumourier, putting on an air of affected gravity, exclaimed, "Ay, sir, it is all over, we are all ruined." The story went round, and those laughed at it who had the least disposition to be diverted.

Lewis XVI. behaved to his ministry with the greatest good-humour. This man was not precisely such a personage as he has been industriously represented by those who were interested in degrading him. He was neither that stupid sot which he has been held out to be for the purpose of exciting contempt, nor that polite, good and affectionate

character for which his friends have extolled him. Nature had formed him in a common kind of mould: he would have acted well in an obscure situation; but he was depraved by a royal education, and lost his moderation at a critical period, in which his safety could have been effected only by the assistance of genius or virtue. A common mind, educated at court, and taught from the cradle the art of dissembling, acquires many advantages in its commerce with mankind. The art of discovering to each no more than he would wish him to know, is only a habit, to which constant exercise gives the appearance of address; and a man must be born an idiot, in order to appear a fool in a similar situation. Lewis XVI. had besides a good memory, and a great share of activity; he never was a moment unemployed, and read a good deal. He had the most perfect and minute knowledge of all the treaties made by France with the neighbouring powers; he was well acquainted with its history, and was the best geographer in his kingdom. Knowledge of names; the just application of them to the physiognomies of the persons of the court to whom they belonged; acquaintance with all their private anecdotes, had been extended by him to every individual, who had at all distinguished himself in the revolution; and no one of any quality or description could be mentioned to him; of whom he could not give some kind of information founded on their private history. But Lewis XVI. without strength of character, was confined in his views, and had twisted as it were his feelings by superstitious prejudices and jesuitical principles. The great ideas of religion, the belief of a God, and the assurance of immortality, are perfectly in harmony with philosophy; and while they rear its column on those most solid of all found-

dations, they likewise adorn it with the most finished capital. Wretched are the legislators who despise these powerful means of inspiring political virtues, and of forming the morals of a nation. If they were even illusions, we ought to cherish them, for the consolation of mankind: but the religion of our priests presented us only with objects of childish fear, and miserable mummeries, instead of good works; and also consecrated the whole code of despotism, on which the authority of the established church is founded. Lewis XVI. was literally afraid of hell, the horns and hoofs of the devil, and excommunication; and with all this it was impossible he should be any thing but a poor creature of a king. If he had been born two hundred years earlier, and had had a reasonable wife, he would have made no more noise in the world than other princes of his line, who have passed across the stage without doing either much good or evil: but ascending the throne amidst the dissoluteness of the court of Lewis XV. and the disordered state of the treasury, and surrounded by corrupted men, he was drawn on by a giddy woman, who joined to Austrian insolence the forwardness of youth, and to the arrogance of grandeur the intoxication of the senses, and the carelessness of levity; and who was herself seduced by all the vices of an Asiatic court. Lewis XVI. too weak to hold the reins of government, which was now falling headlong into ruin, and crumbling to desolation, hastened his own by faults without number. Neckar, who always acted the pathetic in politics as well as in writing; a man of moderate abilities, but of which the world entertained a high opinion, because he had formed a high opinion of them himself, which he was careful to make known; without foresight; a sort of a retail financier, who could only calculate the con-

tents of a purse, and was talking continually of his reputation, as women of intrigue talk of their chastity; Neckar was but a sorry pilot for the storm that was gathering. France was, as it were, exhausted of men: it is a thing highly surprising that they should have been so scarce in this revolution: it has brought forth scarcely any but pigmies. It is not because there was any want of wit, of information, of knowledge, of philosophy: these ingredients had never been more common: it was the blaze of the torch just expiring. But that energy of soul which J. J. Rousseau has so admirably defined as the first characteristic of the hero, supported by that solidity of judgment which knows the just value of every thing; with that foresight which penetrates into futurity, the re-union of which constitutes character, and forms the superior man, we have looked for it every where, but it has been no where to be found.

Lewis XVI. continually floating between the fear of irritating his subjects, and his wish to keep them within bounds, and unable to govern them, convened the states-general, instead of reforming the expences, and regulating his court. After having himself unveiled the spring, and shewed the way to innovation, he hoped to stop its progress, by affecting a power against which he had furnished arms, and against which he had himself given instructions for resistance.

No other means were left him, than to sacrifice with a good grace a part of his authority, in order, by means of the other, to seize the whole, on a proper occasion, which he was not however likely to do; since he gave himself up to the most desperate sort of intrigues, the only sort familiar to those whom he chose for his advisers, under the protection and patronage of his wife. He

had certainly preserved under the constitution sufficient means both of power and of happiness, if he had had the wisdom to keep himself within bounds. Want of ability had disabled him from preventing the establishment of the new government; but honesty alone would have been sufficient to have saved him, if he had been sincere in executing, when he had accepted the constitution. Unhappily for himself, on one hand to support what he was overthrowing with the other, was his crooked policy; and this perfidious conduct first excited mistrust, and then finished by kindling general indignation.

When he had made choice of patriotic ministers, he was particularly anxious to inspire them with confidence; and he succeeded so well, that for three weeks, I saw Roland and Clavieres, enchanted with the king's dispositions, thinking only of the happy order of things, and flattering themselves that the revolution was finished.—“Good God!” I said to them, “every time I see you come from the council with this great confidence, I always think that you are about to commit some act of great folly.” “I assure you,” answered Clavieres, “that the king is perfectly convinced that his interest is intimately connected with the observance of the laws which have been just established: he reasons about them too feelingly not to have a perfect conviction of this truth.” “If,” added Roland, “he be not an honest man, he is the most arrant cheat in the kingdom: dissimulation can hardly go so far.” “And for my part,” I replied, “I have no great confidence in any man’s regard for the constitution, who has been educated in the prejudices of despotism and habits of dissipation, and whose conduct latterly has exhibited a total want both of genius and virtue. Lewis XVI. must be a man very much above the common standard, to have any

sincere regard for a constitution which narrows the limits of his power; and if he had been such a man, he would not have suffered those events to have taken place which have brought about this constitution." My great argument for his insincerity was founded on his flight to Varennes.

There was a council four times a week. The ministers agreed to dine together at each other's houses by turns every council day. I received them on Fridays. De Grave was the minister of war. He was a slight man in all respects; nature had made him mild and timid; his prejudices would have made him haughty, but his heart forced him to be gentle; and from his embarrassment to reconcile these different parts of his character, he became in reality nothing. I think I see him marching with his courtier-like air, his head quite aloft from his feeble frame, shewing the white of his blue eyes, which he could scarcely keep open after dinner, without the help of two or three cups of coffee; speaking but little, as if he had been reserved, but which silence proceeded only from penury of ideas: in fine, he was so bewildered amidst the business of his department, that he asked leave to retire. Lacoste was a true clerk of office under the old system, with an insignificant mien, a cold look, and a dramatical tone, with talents for the ordinary run of affairs: but his formal physiognomy concealed a violence of character which, in discussions where he met with contradiction, made him ridiculous: he had no comprehensive views, nor the activity necessary for a minister. Duranthon, who had been brought up from Bourdeaux to be minister of justice, was honest, as they say, but very indolent: he had an air of vanity, and always appeared to me an old woman, from his timorous character and his consequential

babble. Clavieres was appointed minister of finance, from the reputation he had gained for his knowledge in that branch, but of which I am no judge. He was laborious and active, irascible and obstinate, as those men generally are who live confined to their desks; punctilious and difficult in his discussions, and often in contradiction with Roland: these two men esteemed without ever loving each other, but never disagreed in the great leading principles of their duties.

Dumourier had a greater share than any of these in what is called wit, and less of morality. Diligent and brave, a good general, a thorough-paced courtier, a good writer, a ready speaker, and capable of great undertakings; he was deficient only in firmness of character, and wanted a cooler head to execute the plans he had conceived: good humoured with his friends, and ready to cheat every one of them; assiduous to the ladies, but no way fitted to succeed with those who were to be won only by tenderness; he was altogether formed for the ministerial intrigues of a corrupted court. His splendid qualities, and his love of glory, led us to think that he might be usefully employed in the armies of the republic; and perhaps he would have acted well if the convention had acted wisely; for he had too much good sense not to behave as an honest man, when his reputation and his interest were so intimately concerned.

At this time De Grave was about to be dismissed. The ministers and the patriot deputies were at a loss on whom to fix for his successor, since the military men who had distinguished themselves were almost all of them hostile to the constitution. Roland thought of Servan, who had been long in the service, and had obtained the cross of St. Lewis; and whose principles were not equivocal, since

he had published them previously to the revolution in an excellent work called "The soldier a citizen." We knew him personally from having seen him at Lyons, where he had the deserved reputation of a wise and industrious man; and where he retired after having lost his place at court as governor of the pages, his politics not being suitable either to those of M. St. Priest, or the palace.

Servan is an upright man in the full extent of the term, of an ardent mind, pure morals, with all the austerity of a philosopher, and all the goodness of an affectionate heart; an enlightened patriot, a brave soldier, a vigilant minister: he wanted only perhaps a little more coolness of temper, and more energy of character; but he had a degree of merit rare to find, and we should have been too happy to have had many men of this stamp.

The sittings of the council might be called decent in comparison with what they became afterwards; but they were at that time puerile, considering the great interests which were at stake. Each of the ministers who had *bons** to sign, or other papers belonging to his office, went to the king on the council day to arrange this particular business before the council began. They all went afterwards into the council hall; where, after the decrees had been signed, which the minister of justice presented, debates took place respecting the operations of government, internal order, relations with foreign powers, peace or war, &c. With respect to the proclamations of the day, they had only to examine the decree and apply it, which was always a short business. The king suffered his ministers to talk: in the mean time he read the

* *Bons* are orders for certain operations, most commonly for the delivery of money.

gazette, the English news-papers in their own language, or wrote letters. The sanction of the decrees, however, fixed his attention: he did not give his sanction readily, but never refused. When a decree was presented for the first time, he put off sanctioning it till the following council, when he came with his mind made up.

With respect to objects of great political concern, he often eluded examining them, by turning the conversation on different subjects, or on matters peculiar to each of the ministers. If the business turned on war affairs, he talked about travels; if it was a diplomatic discussion, he began a history of the manners of the country in question, or made enquiries about its situation and produce; if the examination of the state affairs led him into details of agriculture and rural œconomy, he questioned Roland about his works, talked to Dumourier about his anecdotes, and so with the rest. The council in short was little else than a coffee-house, where every one learnt the news of the day, and amused himself with trifles: there was no register kept of the deliberations, no secretary to minute them. After three or four hours conversation the council broke up, without having done any thing, except putting some signatures, and this took place three times a week. "But this is pitiful!" I could not help exclaiming with some ill humour when, on Roland's return, I asked him what had passed. "You are all of you too courteous, because you meet with no opposition, because you are treated with affability and politeness, because you have the appearance of doing each of you in your respective departments just what you please. I am much afraid that you will all be deceived."

"But nevertheless," says Roland, "business goes on."—"Yes, but time is lost; for in the torrent of affairs that is overwhelming you, I would rather see you employ three hours in solitary meditation on those great combinations of events before you, than waste them in useless talk."

The enemy were now forming their plans, and it became absolutely necessary to declare war; a measure which brought on warm discussions, and which the king assented to with extreme repugnance: he had delayed the decision as long as possible, and appeared to yield only when he saw that the majority of the assembly were of that opinion, and that his council was unanimous.

The continuance and multiplicity of religious troubles respecting which the minister for home-affairs had continually but in vain solicited him for some time past to take strong and repressive measures, now compelled him to do so. On the other hand, the bold steps taken by the foreign troops being formidable and menacing, had given the minister of war, Servan, an idea of a military project, which the assembly seized on with enthusiasm, and instantly decreed.

It is very true that these two decrees, one for forming a camp of twenty thousand men between Paris and the frontiers, and the other respecting the priests, were altogether decisive. The court beheld in these measures the overthrow of its secret machinations, of all its plans of partial insurrections, by the means of fanaticism, and the progress of the enemy towards Paris; both of which operations it protected.

The king was too much decided in refusing his sanction to be very earnest in declaring his determination. He made use of different pretences, by

which means he avoided an explanation for fifteen days. A debate was begun several times on these two articles. Roland and Servan insisted with warmth, and with great energy declared the most striking truths, because each felt the importance and the necessity of the law as it respected his particular province. The general interest of the affair was a thing evident to all of them, and the six ministers had but one opinion on this subject.

During these disputes, Dumourier, who was intimate with the king, and whose morals were more in unison with those of the court, was often a visitor of the queen; and as he was not in great harmony with his colleagues, the austerity of whose manners was a reproach to his own, he found soon the means of getting rid of them, and entered into arrangements the effects of which were not long in being felt. A misunderstanding, or rather a serious dispute, had taken place between Dumourier and his colleagues, particularly Roland, respecting baron Carieve, whom Dumourier had made director-general of the foreign department. A report was spread that the sum of one hundred thousand livres was paid to Madame de Beauvert, who lived with Dumourier as his mistress, and did the honours of his table, to the great scandal of those who were connected with him. Dumourier received the representations that were made to him by Roland, both with respect to his neglect of decency, and his attachment to this director-general, with ill-humour: he quitted the meeting of the patriotic deputies, and became visibly cool towards Roland. "From this moment," continues Madame Roland, "he ceased holding any farther communication with the deputies, and became more reserved towards his colleagues; and no doubt began to meditate how he might most expeditiously

rid himself of those whose characters were least in unison with his own. I foresaw the effect of these conferences, and said to Roland; "If you were an intriguer, capable of behaving according to the errors of the old court and its former system, I should say that the moment is come when you ought to get rid of Dumourier, to hinder him from playing you some trick. But honest men understand nothing of these sort of courtier-like skirmishes, and Roland was as incapable of having recourse to them as he was unfitted to practise them.

The delay of the sanction was now understood as a positive veto, as the time was almost expired. We felt that the council not having courage and consistence enough to pronounce their opinions *in mass*, it was Roland's duty, and what integrity and courage directed him, to step forward singly; and we determined together on writing the well-known letter to the king. I composed this letter myself, which was written without much meditation. He carried it to the council to read it aloud on the day when the king, who was still urged respecting his sanction, required the ministers to give each of them his opinion written and signed, and then went rapidly on to talk of other affairs. Roland returned home, added a few lines in the cover of the letter, and had it put into the king's hands on the morning of the 11th of June. The next day, the 12th, about eight o'clock, Servan called on us with a gay countenance. "Give me joy," said he, "I have had the honour to be turned out." "My husband," I replied, "will soon share the same fate, and I am somewhat picqued that you are the first." He told us, that having gone that morning to the king for some private business, he had talked with him very warmly on the necessity of the camp of twenty thousand men, if he was really in earnest

in opposing the designs of the enemy; that the king had turned his back to him in very ill humour; and that Dumourier had just left the war-office, where he had gone to take the seals in consequence of an order which he carried with him. "Dumourier! he plays a sorry part—but it does not surprise me." The three preceding days he had often been at the Thuilleries in long conferences with the queen; and it is not amiss to remark, that Baron Carriève had some interest through her women. Roland hearing that Servan was with me, left the persons to whom he was giving audience, learned the news, and sent to invite his colleagues, Dumourier excepted, to come to him.

It seemed proper not to wait to be dismissed; and as Servan's dismissal had taken place, those who possessed the same principles ought to give in their own, at least unless the king would recall Servan, and dismiss Dumourier, with whom they ought never again to sit in council. I do not doubt but that if the four ministers had behaved in this manner, the court would not have been a little embarrassed to replace them; that La Coste and Duranton would have done themselves credit, and that the business would have been so much the more interesting for the public, as it became so in a very different manner.

The ministers debated without coming to any conclusion, except that they would meet again the next day at eight o'clock in the morning, and that Roland should prepare a letter for them. I could never have believed, if circumstances had not put me in the way of knowing it, that judgment and firmness of character were so rare: how few men are there, consequently, fitted for business, and how much fewer still are formed to govern! Were we to wish for the union of these qualities with

perfect disinterestedness, we wish for a Phoenix, almost impossible to find. I am not astonished that men above the common standard, and who are placed at the head of empires, should hold most commonly the human race in contempt. It is the almost necessary consequence of great knowledge of the world; and in order to avoid the errors into which those may fall who are entrusted with the happiness of nations, there must be a fund of philosophy and of magnanimity not very common.

The ministers kept their appointment, but concluded that it would be better to speak to the king in person than to write to him; a measure which appeared rather as an expedient to avoid losing their places than to come to an explanation. While they were yet deliberating, the king sent a message to Duranthon, the minister of justice, to go immediately and alone. The ministers Roland and Clavières went to wait for him at his hotel. Duranthon returned with a lengthened face and hypocritical air, and drew out slowly from his pocket a paper containing the dismissal of his two colleagues. "You have made us wait a long time for our liberty," said Roland to him, smiling, and taking the paper: he returned and acquainted me with the news, which I had well foreseen. I congratulated him on it, and advised him not to wait till the king announced it to the assembly, but to do it himself; and, since his majesty had taken no advantage of the instructions contained in the letter, to make them useful to the public by publishing them himself. I saw nothing more consistent with the courage of having written to him, than firmness in sending a copy of it to the assembly: in hearing of your dismissal, the assembly will become acquainted with the cause of it.

This idea proved agreeable to my husband, and every one knows the honours which the assembly conferred on the three ministers Servan, Roland, and Clavieres; by declaring that their dismissal was accompanied by the regrets of the nation; as well as the applause bestowed on the letter, which was ordered to be printed and sent into the departments."

This citation from madame Roland's memoirs will not perhaps be thought too long, since it contains the detail of those circumstances which precipitated Lewis XVI. from the throne, and destroyed monarchy in France. It is probable that at some future period this fabric would have fallen amidst the storms of popular discussions: but its dissolution, had the conduct of the court been different, would have been at least more gentle. I have already mentioned that madame Roland sent me from her prison certain papers, with a view no doubt, that I should in some happier days vindicate her memory to the world; and I have till this period, when I find that many of her papers have been preserved, felt the keenest regret, that I was compelled by the late sanguinary system to destroy those in our possession without taking a copy, since to have had them discovered was certain death.

Of the account of the conduct of the court written by madame Roland, general Servan, the only principal actor who still remains, has given me many illustrations. Servan, as minister of war, had to contend not only with the enemies on the frontiers, but with those much more formidable to the state, in the Tuilleries. His office compelled him to hold longer communications with the king than the other ministers—if that could be called so which was only a continued al-

tercation—His duty prompted him to explain to him that his conduct was precipitating himself as well as the kingdom to ruin, and that the whole tenor of it discovered him to be hostile to the constitution, as well as to the interest of the state. “The king seemed at times so thoroughly convinced,” says Servan, “that I deceived myself into a belief that the next meeting he would assent to the propositions offered him: but in the interval he had been assailed and hardened into resistance in favour of Austria, by the queen—in favour of the priests, by madame Elisabeth; so that it required going the same round of argument to bring him again to conviction. The king sometimes appealed to Servan, as knowing, from having been long at court, the rectitude of his intentions; to which Servan never would assent: on the contrary, he told him that his weakness, which was criminal, would never be any shield against the indignation of the people, who would not enter into distinctions. Sometimes Servan finding no good was to be done that day, sat down to write till the hour when the council broke up, which distressed the king exceedingly; who frequently interrupted him, by asking if he was taking notes of their conversation. No secretary was allowed, though decreed by the constitution, and repeatedly insisted on by Roland and Servan; the former of whom brought his great morocco covered book, under his arm, to the great diversion of Servan, in order to enter the records: but the king persisted in his refusal, and the pages remained from the first to the last unfulfilled.

T H E E N D.

